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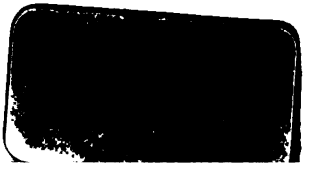

THE

MORE EXCELLENT WAY;

OR,

Links in Love's Chain.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "THE BRITISH SOLDIER IN INDIA,"
"THE KEY OF THE TREASURY,"
ETC.

SEELEY, JACKSON, AND HALLIDAY, 54 FLEET STREET.
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INTRODUCTION.

"Oh, thou who followest the Lamb
Where'er He leads with willing feet,—
Thou who art called by His own name,
For whom He hath prepared a seat,—
To all who see thee, all who hear,
Let likeness to thy Lord appear.

In converse make His praise thy theme,
What are inferior topics worth?
If scoffed at, His reproach esteem
More than the praise of this poor earth;
Be this thy constant, lofty aim,
Whilst here, to glorify His name.

And, as an artist with delight,
On some great masterpiece intent,
Studies his model day and night,
Unwearied still, yet not content,
Study Christ's portraiture divine,
Till in thyself the transcript shine."

God is Love.—In Him love dwells without measure; He is its very essence. Natural human and creature affection is one of the lovely traits from Eden, more or less preserved in His creation by Him whose breath can alone give any good gift. He made all things good in the beginning; all was arranged in beauteous harmony to give His creation pleasure. Mutual service was to be rendered amongst the creatures of His hand; love and careful tending on the part of man would make the ground bear him abundant food, the animal creation to own him gladly lord, and his need of kindred sympathy was supplied by the gift of woman, and the consequent multiplying of both sexes. A departure from this harmony was the immediate effect of Satan's influence; evidenced, in jealousy towards God, that He should know more than man, and selfishness towards man, throwing upon another the blame of a sin mutually shared in. Since then, this world has grievously fallen from its first estate, and self has taken the place of love. Sin is now the inherent of every child of man, and where sin is, pure, God-like love cannot be. If, then, love, in its fullest sense, can only be found in God, and in those angels and ransomed sinners who stand in His presence, how can we learn what God means by this name Love, by which He describes Himself? Who shall pretend to portray that which no man hath seen nor understood?

Reader! I would seek only to gather from our Bibles the fragmentary descriptions scattered o'er its pages in such rich profusion, and learn from them something of what love is. Descriptions, though, are ever but poor substitutes for taste, and sight, and hearing, and feeling, therefore I would entreat you, seek earnestly for yourself, depend not on fallible human helps, fix your eyes above, and ask that this passage of God's book may be to each of us "sunlit;"[1] that through it God may teach us His will, may show us more clearly than we have seen it before, His own self standing forth as the personification of Love. May we trace in what love consists; how we may have His very essence transfused into ourselves; that we may *grow* in love, up into all the fulness of our God, into a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Let us together seek to realise this description as fulfilled in Him. Where He sets any standard before His people, we see Him in it. His desires for them are but the settings forth of His inmost mind; and as we gaze into His fulness and perfection, and can find no end thereof, we shall be constrained to say, with increased intelligence of worship, with all our heart, as incapable of particularising His character thoroughly, Yea, He is altogether lovely.

This volume is intended only as a *help* to *fellow-believers*, if it shall please God to give the writer any true thoughts of Himself, which shall strike with new force, or at least serve as an incentive to more earnest seekings to know Him. His desire is not only to have a saved people, but that when He shall appear they may be

[1] Doing and Suffering; or, Memorials of Elizabeth and Fanny Bickersteth.

like Him; and now is the preparation-time for that glory; now He is seeking to mould each of His people into that image.

We shall be like Him, that is, the Father, as we see by the preceding verse. I and my Father are one. Like Jehovah, the Triune God! Blessed truth, that the Spirit Himself teacheth about Himself, else we might well despair of learning what love is in this selfish world! Like Him; sinless, immortal, holy, happy. It is by gazing on Him, face to face, that those in heaven become perfectly like Him; thoroughly emptied of self, they are filled with His spirit, and love and admiration constrain perfect obedience and conformity of mind and will. And in proportion as we below earnestly look through the glass, and live—piercing by faith through the clouds and mists of the many things which trouble the natural man, enduring as seeing Him who is invisible, and already quickened and raised up, and sitting in heavenly places, we here shall attain in part to His likeness. There, unfettered by earthly claims, unentangled by sinful desires and unholy thoughts, uninjured by bad examples, believers are like a still lake, giving back perfectly the image of Him upon whom they gaze. And here we may share the same if we yield *ourselves* unto God, and, looking off unto our polestar continually, let none of the cares of life destroy our calm. The seeing, then, face to face is dependent on the now using faithfully the glass of revelation. There perhaps, certainly here, there will be diversity in the reflexions, not only according to the degree of attainment, but the varied characters will give forth His indwelling rays through the distinctive features of their individuality. God is the sun and centre of every converted, renewed soul, and to

be like Him,—to think, to speak, to wish, to act, like Him,—must be the ambitious aim of each.

Dear reader, whilst you read what the Lord has been pleased to reveal to one of His weak children, will you strive to get clearer, brighter, larger views direct from Him yourself? It is joy to get good tidings of one we love, but how much better to speak face to face; the safest way to get true views of our God, the only way to get close communion with Him, is to come, each one for himself, and study the Bible picture (as it is in truth) as God's likeness given to man. True, we shall never fully know nor understand Him, nor see Him unveiled here; but the training and learning below shall fit us for the sight of, nay more, to wear, His own glorified and sinless perfection above.

In attempting such a work as that of drawing out the picture of love from this chapter, as exemplified in God, and as capable and needful of imitation by each one of His people, the writer deeply feels how inadequate man is to represent in anywise Him whom no mortal tongue can worthily praise, no heart sufficiently love and admire, no human mind grasp. Yet, if He shall teach a waiting heart, the Bible expressions regarding Himself may be so arranged and thought upon, that she and her readers may be enabled to strive after His image with a more definite and exalted aim than hitherto.

With St. Paul, our desire shall be, as you and I, reader, take up our Bibles, as we listen for His voice, and reverentially gaze on what He reveals to loving faith—that I may know Him. Step by step now we will take, leaning on Him, eagerly reaching forth, but taking heed that we grasp and accept only that which is true, according to His written testimony. That I may know

Him! Ah! how little can we ever know here of Him! Yet, brother, we will learn what we can; we will look upwards, and, intensely grateful for the assurance that the precious blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed us from all sin, we will strive to prove our devoted gratitude by studying and trying to keep, through the Spirit's own aid, His commandments; and as we gaze, a growing, ever-deepening, all-absorbing love shall be ours, and we shall be changed into the same image.

Like Him! like God! But because He is sinless, so far removed above us, untempted, untried, how can mortals copy Him? Seems He too great? too unapproachable? Then turn we to the God-man, Immanuel, and follow Him in His daily walk during a thirty-three years' pilgrimage on earth: as the man, He is our copy, for He knows what is in man; He was in all points tempted like as we are, compassed with infirmities; He came to be our example.

"Say, trembler, is Emmanuel's name
Above thy reach, beyond thy grasp?
Is He who from the Father came
Too great for thee to clasp?
Go to yon hill, behold *the man*,—
Look on that languid, closing eye;
And is too narrow yet thy span?
Is Jesus yet too high?
Enter the Temple, see *the child*,—
That gentle, pensive, docile boy;
Scan well those features, holy, mild;
Let them thy doubts destroy.
What! trembling still? Then come with me,
Pass softly through the stable-door;
Embrace *the babe* on Mary's knee,
Then smile, and doubt no more."

The humanity of Christ brings God very near; and as we gaze on Him, and mark, through His sinlessness and power to work miracles, how truly this man was the Son of God, we shall rejoice to feel that we are actually looking on God Himself; on Him whom we are soon to be perfectly like. Let us pray again and again, as we seek to look on Him, and to learn what means His name — Love;—

Lord! teach me to know Thee. Show me Thyself. Pour forth Thy power on my soul. Write Thy love on my heart. Empty me of self; may it be merged in the all-absorbing love and admiration Thou shalt win from me. Grant me increasing knowledge of Thee whilst I stay on earth, and hereafter let me joy in Thy unveiled presence through all eternity. Tell me Thy name.

CHAPTER I.

"What grace, O Lord, and beauty shone
Around Thy steps below!
What patient love was seen in all
Thy life and death of woe!

For ever on Thy burdened heart
A weight of sorrow hung;
Yet no ungentle, murmuring word,
Escaped Thy silent tongue.

Thy foes might hate, despise, revile,
Thy friends unfaithful prove;
Unwearied in forgiveness still,
Thy heart could only love.

Oh! give us hearts to love like Thee,
Like Thee, O Lord, to grieve
Far more for others' sins, than all
The wrongs that we receive.

One with Thyself, may every eye
In us, Thy brethren, see
That gentleness and grace that spring
From union, Lord, with Thee."

CHARITY SUFFERETH LONG.

Exemplified in God's Dealings with Israel—In the God-man—In the Experience of every Individual—Special Comfort for Backsliders—Gracious Effects of His Mercy—Believer's consequent Duty—Imperfection of Human Sympathy—Long-suffering contrary to Nature—Believers peculiarly open to Sensitiveness—Their Strength only of God—Henry Martyn—The Unwearied Mother—The Recipient of Mercy himself Long-suffering.

THIS would appear to be the "negative of the positive;"[1] that whereas, charity is kind, expresses the kind of action engendered by true love, so charity suffereth long, showeth from what love abstains. Whilst, on the one hand, love does good, on the other it forbears to do injury.

The Lord is slow to anger; mark how, even at the moment when, of necessity, to satisfy His spotless justice, He condemned mankind in Adam for sin, He yet offered mercy, and held out to him the bright promise of a Redeemer. Not at once even then was Adam cut off, but children were given him, even the privilege that through his descendants should that Saviour come. To Cain, it was promised, that even yet, if he did well, he should be accepted; and had but ten righteous been found in Sodom, that guilty city would have been spared. Not without warning did the flood overwhelm the old world, but they had for long the ark in course of building, daily to remind them visibly, as well as Noah's preaching orally,

[1] Rev. Charles Hargrove.

of the coming judgment on their sins. Trials, differing in degree, were ten times sent on Pharaoh, ere, for his continued disobedience and hardness of heart, death sealed the eternal fate of him and his host. To Nineveh Jonah was sent with a warning, and on its king and people humbling themselves the past was forgiven. How often had the wanderings, and stubborn rebelliousness, and ingratitude of the Israelites been pardoned, ere sentence was passed that none of those men who had left Egypt should enter Canaan. Not at once was the Babylonish captivity sent on the Jews, for first the Lord God of their fathers had sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling-place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy. God withdrew not His prophets, but sent messenger after messenger, though the Jews treated them with contempt and cruelty. Lastly, He sent His Son; still they scorned the message; He came unto His own, and His own received Him not; yet forty years more of preaching had failed to win that hardened people, ere Titus was allowed to fulfil God's threats and destroy Jerusalem.

Now turn we to the God-man, and mark how, in His humanity, He bears ever about with Him this God-like stamp of long-suffering. The whole thirty-three years He spent on earth must have been one continued pain, even had He shared earth's honours and comforts, and met with nought but kindliness and love; for it necessitated the putting off of His sovereignty, His humbling Himself, and His unceasingly suffering the atmosphere of a sin-tainted world, the companionship of

sinners, and the lack of heaven's worship. How fearfully must this suffering have been increased by the treatment He received! And yet nought stayed Him in His loving, self-chosen path of long-suffering. He entered the city of the Gergesenes to heal; they prayed Him thanklessly to depart out of their coasts, and He left without reproaching them. The disciples would have destroyed the Samaritan village, where they refused Him rest and refreshment; He left it unharmed. They scoffingly termed Him the friend of publicans and sinners; meekly He bore their insult, unhesitatingly acknowledging that His mission *was* to such. Laughing and scorning followed that gentle Presence even into the chamber of death; still it elicited no anger from Him. They ascribed His very miracles to devilish agency; but He still went about in love doing good. Hatred filled the hearts of the multitude because of His deeds of mercy; but He forbore not giving out healing and blessing. He bore with the continual faithlessness and mistaken views of His friends regarding Himself and His work, even though they afforded a handle to His enemies. Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end, though He knew from the beginning how all would forsake Him in His hour of need. He foreknew the treachery in Judas' heart, yet chose him, and allowed him to retain his privileged place as a disciple, that, if possible, His love might overpower and save him. He might have called down twelve legions of angels, but with gentle patience He endured. To the scoffing, the spitting on Him, the smiting Him, He answered nothing. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. Not at once were the thieves who railed on Him in His last dread agonies cut off for sin

added to sin; but, even then, when one repentant scoffer looked to Him for mercy, those precious tones of inextinguishable love, from the parched lips, told, not only of pardon, but of Paradise. During the agonising hours on the cross, embittered by the mocking jeers, the cruel taunts of the incensed multitude around, He breathed only prayer for His murderers, pleading for them even an excuse.

Thus we see that God, Who *is Love*, suffereth long. Day by day, year after year, He has borne, and is bearing, with contempt, disobedience, and ingratitude; still He gives His winter and summer, His rain and sunshine, His food and clothing, friendships, and all the many blessings of this life; He loadeth unceasingly with mercies the unthankful and the evil, even though these gifts are turned against Him. "God is exceedingly bountiful and liberal; not with the view that we should rest in the possession of His gifts, but to win our heart and all to Himself. God bids us give up our idols, man clings the closer to them; then sometimes He is driven to speak in a way not to be overlooked nor mistaken; and, if blessed, drops of sorrow are seeds of glory. Yet how sad to assist in filling our own cup of sorrows."[1]

And have we not realised the same Divine forbearance in our own histories? Where should we now be, had not God in wrath remembered mercy? Sorrow has come, but how many gifts have been overlooked—how many mercies requited with base ingratitude? Hopes have been blighted, but how often had the mere anticipation, as an idol, clouded from us the presence of our

[1] Rev. F. C. Newell.

God! How often has the Spirit made some scripture, or sermon, or casual word, strike home to our hearts, convicting of some besetting sin, and yet how little fruit has that conviction borne! How repeatedly has the same evil thing been indulged in, and still God has borne patiently with us, and has not yet wearied in His work of education! Till each of His chosen be gathered in, till each individually is moulded to fit his prepared place, the Lord patiently waits.

How tenderly does the innate love of God manifest itself in His expressed yearnings after His ungrateful wandering ones,—"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? mine heart is turned within me." Not only does He promise to seek the lost, but even to pursue those who, having once followed Him, have been driven from His pastures, lured by the voice of the hellish enchanter. "I will bring again that which was driven away." How often does the preoccupation of the heart upon some other theme than Christ prove the cause of down-slipping! Sometimes the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, ensnare the child of God back again into the mazes of sin. Or, again, how apt are we to unbalance the evenly-weighed truths of Scripture, and, in accepting the portion temporarily most pleasing to self, deceive ourselves with the belief that in obeying it alone we are following our Shepherd! It may be that His work so engages interest that the believer denies himself the time allotted and needed for lying down; now, when so much hangs on him, and needs his individual superintendence, he feels the call cannot be for him, "Come ye yourself apart into a desert place, and rest awhile;" and yet the word from on high is,

"I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." Faithfully to witness for Him, we must ourselves know much of Him; and to walk embued with His Spirit, we need not only to realise His presence ever accompanying us, but to be often alone with Him, drinking into His very being, sitting at His feet, listening to His words. Such waiting on Him will enable us to come forth with His reflected radiance beaming on our face, which will influence more for Him than any amount of labour without it.

> "When one who holds communion with the skies
> Has filled His urn where these pure waters rise,
> And once more mingles with us meaner things,
> 'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings,
> Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
> And tells us whence His treasure is supplied."[1]

The manna given is only sufficient for present need; to sustain our own spiritual life it needs fresh and fresh supplies; and still more do we require feeding when we seek, not only ourselves to live, but also to give of what we receive to others. But whilst such resting times will never hinder our work, Satan has a contrary device for those naturally inactive or more contemplative; to these he suggests that there is more than enough to do within to allow of efforts for others, and by false humility he soothes the believer's heart into unhealthy indolence. Oh, would that we more dreaded the first steps in the downward road—that we took more heed of the droppings which may at length cause inundation! By these beginnings Satan would feign drive us far from God; and fearfully ought we to dread a yielding to what, after the *first constraint*, may prove an *easy* road to destruction.

[1] Cowper.

Yet, even with the face thus turned to evil, there is hope still for the tempted, fallen believer, thus a second time Satan's slave; for the promise is, "I will bring again that which was driven away."

Yet, oh! let the word *driven* warn all from abusing this promise of extenuating mercy; the message is not for the wilful backslider, but for the one overcome through sore temptation. Perfection requires symmetry, as well as beauty of individual parts, and thus God's holiness demands that to sinners He be just in requiting punishment; the goodness of God would feign lead to repentance, but, when it fails to do so, then judgment must take the place of mercy; love suffereth long, but when the sinner repudiates all the strivings of the Spirit, there remaineth no more hope for him; for "the Lord is merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, *and that will by no means clear the guilty.*"

Perhaps there is no stronger proof of love than long-suffering: to nerve for a temporary effort is comparatively easy, but to bear continually is trying indeed. And how blessed the effects of God's long-suffering on many of His people! "He shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon, his branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon!" And not with these forgiven ones does the blessing rest alone, for the promise continues, that even those around shall benefit through the long-suffering that has been shown them: "They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine; the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon."

And now, dear reader, if our experience is that God's gentleness hath made us great, ought we not to strive to follow His example, and have like patience with our fellow-sinners? Wherever man is, there is a being compassed with infirmities, requiring, therefore, patient forbearance. Made in the likeness of God, he yet inherited original sin through Adam, and since his birth has been increasingly defiling himself by yielding to fallen nature; and thus there must be in each human being much not only to offend God, but man. Some there are whom natural graces make loveable; but even amongst such there are few, if any, who have not their rough outward corners. In others, the exterior may be more marred; but, in any case, even those who love most deeply must find somewhat that tests their patience. Charity suffereth long, but nature is quick to take and give offence. Some spirits, unwillingly, unconsciously, feel the least breath of unkindness, or even of a want of courteous gentleness. Acutely alive to any touch, like the sensitive plant, *that* pains them which to others seems so foolishly trifling as to mark peculiar sinfulness in the offended. It *is* an infirmity, a blot, and, when yielded to, doubtless a sin, for we never read of any token, either by word or manner, of irritation on the part of the tempted God-man; and yet His mind was framed with a delicacy and perfect purity that made Him specially open to the trials of such sensitive spirits. They who are thus should make it a subject of fervent prayer and continual effort to overcome this quickness to take, sometimes unmeant, offence. But yet God requires of His people to show tender forbearance to such weakly ones, and to make special efforts to avoid giving them pain. We little know the heart of another, nor the

agony rife often from a cause at which we might smile: there are secret sicknesses of hearts which man cannot probe, for

> "Nor even the tenderest heart, and next our own,
> Knows half the reasons why we smile and sigh.
> Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe
> Our hermit spirits dwell, and range apart,
> Our eyes see all around, in gloom or glow,
> Hues of their own, fresh borrowed from the heart."[1]

The cross of one might, if transferred, be no cross to another. He who apportions each does so with a perfect knowledge of individual character, since He, the Potter, made each vessel originally after His own pleasure; and, therefore (if need be for trying discipline), His all-wise love sends just that which is *the* heart-sore; that, disentangled from all below, and trained in the Master's school, His work may be perfected in His servant. Now man at best *but imperfectly* knows another, and, sinful and ignorant himself, still less how to train him. How often do we find the most earnest efforts in education fail! and even when deemed successful, how far short of perfection has yet been attained! but such are never the results of God's training. Since, therefore, we see not the hidden depths of the character of any, nor from beginning to end of their life, as He does, and consequently cannot thoroughly enter into God's plan with any, does it not become us to take care how we offend one of His little ones?

How striking is that word of God to His enemies, whom yet He had employed as instruments for inflicting needful punishment on His people: "I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but

[1] Keble.

a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction." And how much more must He look to see tender sympathy and sorrow, and not jealous pleasure, in condemning and punishing, from His new creation! "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him through whom they come!" An unseen trial may crush the heart of one whose path all deem sunny and enviable. "The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." More or less of spirit-anguish all must have, since full of blessing as is this world, full of the marks of a loving Creator and Preserver, it is yet cursed for sin; and it is written, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Blessed is it for "those who passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well!" They, trusting implicitly in the love which regulates their steps, rest calmly ever on the assurance that all things are working together for good to them; and, thankfully accepting God's sunshine, also thankfully accept His shade; gladly receiving, gladly yielding back, believing that

> "The strongest light casts deepest shade;
> The dearest love makes dreariest loss.
> Yet, since not grief but joy shall last,
> The day and not the night abide;
> And all Time's shadows earthward cast,
> Are lights upon the other side."[1]

Knowing some bitterness ourselves, and bearing about with us a sin-stained body, for both of which we desire sympathy and long-suffering shown us, should we not seek so to learn others that we may know how to give them what they need, and to avoid giving them pain? Jesus does not consider any sorrow of His people too

[1] E. C.

trifling for His sympathy, which untiringly He grants. His promise of pardon overcomes the reluctance of our guilt to appear in His pure sight; faith in His known character of love is the source of all our joy and safety; and, so should it not be with His disciples, that, whilst journeying through their appointed time on earth, they give themselves up, for His sake and in His strength, to bless all,—to win those who are mourning for sin or earthly trials out of sight of the Cross,—to strengthen and help forward those who, whilst travelling Zionwards, are bearing the family badge of suffering?

This path of long-suffering, being contrary to nature, is far from easy to follow. Chafed often by a sense of our own sins and infirmities, our eyes are peculiarly opened to detect those of others; and the sink of corruption within us, however slightly stirred, only too readily finds a vent for its obnoxious vapours; for the tongue, though a little member, is a world of iniquity; it defileth the whole body, and is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks; and, therefore, "if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." "No man is born with a holy silence in his heart, as he is born with a tongue in his mouth. This is a flower of Paradise; it is a precious gem that God makes very great reckoning of. A quiet, silent spirit is of great esteem with God. God sets the greatest value upon persons of a quiet spirit. A quiet spirit is a spark of the Divine nature. It is a heaven-born spirit. A quiet spirit speaks a man most like to God; it capacitates a man for communion with God; it renders a man most serviceable to God; and it obliges a man to most accu-

rate walking with God. A meek and quiet spirit is an incorruptible ornament, much more valuable than gold."[1]

And thus it is that the Master's word is fulfilled. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another;" because where true love is the motive-spring within, there will be the outward manifestation of a spirit subdued into unearthly gentleness and forbearance. Some, having naturally more impatience of temperament, may still, by frequent ebullitions of temper and angry speech, dishonour their profession; still, doubtless, in such there will be a marked change; and, could the inward warfare be witnessed, many secret victories, many agonisings of spirit for defeats, would be found. Of the gentle Master we read, "A bruised reed shall He not break;" untainted by sin Himself, He yet knew what was in man, and deeply sorrowed over his misery. His will was that all should be saved, and He therefore cherished the faintest spark of right feeling in any, forgiving even indulged infirmities, that to the sinner might still be open an opportunity of choosing safety rather than death. If for the scorned prostitute He had a word of hope and gentle sufferance, for the fallen disciple He had prayer and increased love. How exceedingly His love and patience were tried, we shall realise better in proportion as we become imbued with God's horror of sin. If His law written on the natural heart makes some sins almost intuitively hateful, and if to the godless the effects of the workings of sins in others gives pain, much more keen must be the sense of sin experienced by the child of God, in whose dark heart the command has been heard,

[1] Rev. T. Brooks.

"Let there be light;" far more stinging the sin seen and felt in others;—the offence of the Cross can thus never cease, for those who rise highest above earth most clearly see the filthiness of its righteous things, and most faithfully, lovingly desire to show to others the painful truth that has been revealed to them: these, with veiled hearts, seeing and understanding not, attribute to the believer pride and self-satisfaction. Religion, therefore, in calling to the taking of this peculiar cross, needs also to provide a means for enduring the soul to bear amidst increased provocation. God, we know, never gives a command requiring impossibilities; "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." In Him dwelleth all fulness of perfection, and therefore grace to suffer long; and in God manifest in the flesh, who took part of our flesh and blood, and became, like man, compassed with infirmity, we see this heavenly grace preserved amidst superhuman temptations, through the indwelling of that Spirit whom God gave not by measure unto Him. Though on earth, Jesus could ever say, "I and my Father are one;" and His constant support, through His depressing mission-life, was in unburdening His soul to His Father, in spending hours—even nights, when His days were filled up with labours—in fervent prayer. Thus strengthened, He walked through a sinful, busy world, keeping His garments unspotted, communing constantly in His heart with His Father, and manifesting in His life the love in God's heart to poor sinners.

And since Christ so obtained grace for our example, learn we not hence whence we may draw like strength to bear with the sins and infirmities of our fellow-creatures? "The spiritual life is nothing else but the working of the Spirit of God within us, and therefore

our own silence must be a great part of our preparation for it; and much speaking, or a delight in it, will be often no small hindrance of that good which we can only have from hearing what the Spirit of God speaketh within us. This is not enough known by religious persons. They rejoice in kindling a fire of their own, and delight in hearing their own voice, and so lose that inward unction from above which alone can new-create their hearts. To speak with the tongues of men or angels on religious matters, is a much less thing than to know how to stay the mind upon God, and abide with Him in the closet of our hearts, observing, loving, adoring, and obeying His holy will."[1] "Holiness is something of God, wherever it is. It is an efflux from Him, and lives in Him; as the sunbeams, although they gild this lower world, and spread their golden wings over us, yet they are not so much here, where they shine, as in the sun from whence they flow."[2] "It has been said that no great work in literature or in science was ever wrought by a man who did not love solitude. We may lay it down as an elemental principle of religion, that no large growth in holiness was ever gained by one who did not take time to be often, and long, *alone with God.* 'This kind goeth not out, but by prayer and fasting.' No otherwise can the great central idea of God enter into a man's life, and dwell there supreme. Such a possession of the idea of God we never gain but from still hours. For such holy joy in God, we must have much of the spirit of Him who rose up a great while before day, and departed into a solitary place and prayed, and who continued all night in prayer—the morning-star finding Him where the evening star had left Him."[3]

[1] Rev. W. Law. [2] Dr. Cudworth. [3] Austin Phelps.

Not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; our sufficiency is of God: the Spirit helpeth our infirmities. If we would think and act in a God-like manner, we must drink into His very being, nailing self to His cross; His love induced entire self-abnegation; and ours, drawn from Him, the alone source of love, will work in us as it did in Him. Crucified with Christ, and no longer ourselves living, but Christ living in us, the life we now live is sustained through the constant inspiration of the Holy Spirit. United in one being to our risen Head, we must be governed in every feeling by Him; now shall we growingly see as He sees, love as He loves, act and speak according to His will, and be in measure what He is.

O God, grant unto us, we pray Thee, hearts to realise Thine infinite condescension towards, Thy high desires for us, poor sinful dust; that, our faith strengthened, our hope quickened, our love intensified, we may more freely feed on Thy hidden manna, and know, each of us, the calm, holy, joyful assurance of that disciple whom Thou lovedst: as He is, so am I in this world. With ever-deepening humility may we realise our indissoluble union to Thee, and in Thy inhaled vitality be living, fruitful members; in Thy imparted strength be strong; in Thy imbibed Spirit be Christ-like; so that all may take knowledge of us, that we have been with Thee.

"The heart is deceitful above all things;" and thence it is that often, when tried by sins and infirmities in others, Christians argue that their walk is according to the command, "Be ye angry, and sin not;" that they do well to be vexed, for it is on God's behalf. But our Example loved ever the sinner, and whilst with authority He condemned sin, and warned the transgressor, no

impetuous storm of passion ever disturbed the holy calm of His soul.

We read of one of the most loving men that ever lived, Henry Martyn, that on one occasion during his stay in India, his tender conscience bitterly reproached him for a failure in this grace of sufferance. A minister of the Church of England, and attached to its formula, he yet was not bigoted, but eagerly gave the right hand of fellowship to members of other denominations, realising that those who hold the Head are all one; that serving, as it were, in different regiments, they yet form one army, fighting under one banner, against a common enemy. It was therefore with deep sorrow that he heard of an order issued by the Government (it afterwards turned out that he had been misinformed) to prevent the Baptists preaching and distributing tracts. So keenly was he excited, so sincerely did he feel for them, that he could not sleep, and he *spoke very vehemently against the measures of Government.* Bitterly did he afterwards reproach himself for this impatience towards those whom he felt to be evil-doers. "I know not what manner of spirit I am of; I fancy it is all zeal for God; but what a falsehood is this! Did Jesus canvass the proceedings of government in the spirit of one of this world? I pray to be preserved from ever falling into this snare again. Let me never fancy I have zeal, till my heart overflows with love to every human being."

Yes, even to outcasts, to wanderers, to those whose views differ from our own! How often, alas! have we committed Martyn's sin, without his consequent contrition! How apt are we to declaim against the actions and errors of others, instead of casting the beam out of our own eye! The difficulties and responsibilities of those

in high places are undervalued, and harsh judgment is often passed on them! Infirmities are forgotten to be such, and are dealt with as wilful sins! And sins excite angry passions in those who are themselves sinners!

Dear reader! stand we not sorely condemned by this self-judgment of the holy Martyn? How often have we criticised where love would have been silent! how prone have we been to find fault where charity would make excuses! Let us seek that our hearts and lips be never again stained by impatience against sinners and fellow-believers, and bitter, reproachful language. If Divine grace preserves us from some sins, let us share his humble conviction who said, on seeing a murderer led to the stake, "There, but for the grace of God, goes John Brad ford!" remembering that others, differing *in kind* only, are ours.

"Charity suffereth long; many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it;" fickleness, ingratitude, unkindness, but deepen it. We have seen how the God of love patiently has waited in all ages of His Church till His chosen were made meet for their inheritance; bearing with all their rebellion and backslidings. And the love He implants in their hearts must bear like fruit. Love has for its paramount object the happiness of its beloved; and, as in the Master's, so in the true disciple's, life, earnest desire and effort for the eternal salvation of sinners must be one of the prominent traits. To win and to strengthen must be the life-long work. Oh! if we more laid this Heaven-inspired object to heart, would it not mellow our social characters, restraining those idle and unkind words which induce sin in others, and cause so much pain? Time cannot exhaust the patience of true love, nor repeated hindrances and failures

damp its zeal. Having the salvation and perfection of every soul at heart, love willingly yields its personal ease and pleasures, and seeks so to adapt itself to the need of each, as to help each nearer God.

A soldier and his wife had an only daughter, whom they brought up with fond, prayerful care, seeking to lead her to Jesus both by example and teaching. Agnes, however, hated their religion, and at the age of sixteen went into service, that she might be away from home influences. This happened soon after her father had left England for service in the East. Months passed away, lessening hope, as their child increasingly barred her heart against the truth. In the beginning of 1859, Agnes went home for a week's holiday; her mother, with renewed hope and faith, receiving her gladly, and resolving to leave no effort untried to make it a time of blessing. The first evening she spoke to her very plainly, telling her, that though from her birth she had been the subject of intensely earnest prayer, yet that she felt she had never prayed enough "in front of her." "Now, Agnes," she continued, "I'm determined to pray every night you are at home, till your heart is brought down to Jesus."

Agnes was very angry, and told her mother that all the fuss she made, and all the speaking about it, only made her hate religion the more. At night, when both were undressed, Mrs. L—— knelt down by the bed. "No, mother," said Agnes, "you are not going to do that; you may go down-stairs, if you want to pray." "Well, then, Agnes, I'll pray outside the door." Agnes turned the key on her mother, who knelt down outside the door, and began to pray in her heart. Presently she thought, "Agnes will think I'm asleep; maybe, if I pray

aloud, she may listen, and hear some word which God may make touch her heart;" and so this earnest mother prayed aloud till morning. During that and the next night Agnes opened the door now and then to see if her mother still prayed. The third night she resolved only to listen through the key-hole, that her mother might have nothing to induce her to pray on,—nothing to make the time pass faster. Still, ever on listening, did she hear the gentle voice entreating mercy for her soul.

The last night of her holiday, when Mrs. L——, as usual, was about to go outside the door to pray, Agnes said, "Well, mother, if you will be such a fool as to pray for me, you may as well stay here as out in the cold;" so by her girl's side she pleaded that night. Next day Agnes returned to her place. To her mother she seemed unchanged,—rough in manner, unkind in speech; yet that mother's nightly sacrifice had already told on the girl, and there was more of steadiness and respect in her manner to those over her, though, as yet, her heart was untouched.

A few weeks after this, she was sitting over a novel one Sunday evening, when the rest of the household were at church. Half-dozing over it, the thought rushed into her mind, "What can have made mother give up seven nights' sleep for me? I'm sure, *I* would not give up *one* for anybody. There must be something very awful coming on me that I don't know of;" and, uninterested in her story, she rose and fetched the hitherto unopened Bible out of her box, where her praying mother had placed it.

From that hour, little by little, that precious book became more full of reality to her, till it revealed her

fearful state—a sinner striving against conviction, living without God, without any hope beyond death. At last her agony of mind became so great that she wrote, bitterly accusing her mother of great cruelty in having brought her away from the rest and happiness she had always enjoyed. Tremblingly Mrs. L—— rejoiced over this bud of promise, and, with renewed fervency and hope, prayed that Jesus might be revealed to her child; and she was heard, and the desire of her heart granted. Faith was given Agnes to believe that all her sins had been nailed to the cross, and so she found joy; and, truly grieving over her past rebellion to God and her parents, she earnestly strove in every-day life to prove that the change was real.

May we not trace here the counterpart, through inspired grace, of the godly love we before marked? The wayward, ungrateful child, borne with, argued with, more deeply loved than ever; self-denial in the mother following the self-crucifixion of God; and with the same blessed results, even the pardoning of the prodigal, the folding him to the heart, now dearer than ever, after his confession and true repentance!

Now, reader, may we go and do likewise! Let our love prove itself by prompting and strengthening to give to others that which costs us something. The principle of love being the transferring of self into the object beloved, it follows that those who have been grafted into the God of love must love Him supremely, and their neighbour as themselves. "Therefore all things whatsoever we would that men should do to us, we must do even so to them;" quick to find excuses for our own faults, keenly smarting under criticism, cross words, and harsh judgment, and claiming sympathy and patient for-

bearance, let us act ever on the golden rule. True, they may repeatedly disappoint us; it may be they know our infirmity or besetting sin, and delight in chafing our patience by grieving or provoking us; or years may pass by without our seeing any answer to our efforts and prayers for them; or the same sins may be seen in them after the lapse of time, and it would seem that no effort is made to conquer them; all these things are trying to flesh and blood, and, as we have seen, peculiarly so to the cleansed, quickened, and (in measure) sanctified sons of God; yet the love of Christ constraineth ever, and through all things, to live for those for whom He died; and He having died for all, *those into whom He has breathed new life, and His own Spirit,* MUST BREATHE OUT OF THE SAME *they have received from Him.* For this reason He Himself said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." Man, having nothing but what he receives, must, of necessity, be the servant of one of two masters. If he looks, and speaks, and does evil, it is because he has been the recipient of evil; his master is the devil, and the lusts of that master he does. If, on the other hand, his looks, language, and actions are God-like, it is because grace has been given him; he is of his Master, Christ, and the works of that Master he does.

Too true, though, it yet is, that Satan often transforms himself into an angel of light, and, the beauty of holiness being so evident, has even taught his servants to admire and copy much of the outward grace of the religion of love, which yet, springing not from the right motive, and done not in the only Name and strength which finds acceptance before God, avails nothing. But, dear reader, though the best things may be abused, duty is equally incumbent on us, requiring fulfilment; all who

are Christ's have put on Christ; and, as He suffered long, and suffers still, so must our prayerful, life-long aim be to know and have in ourselves this same love, to be pitiful and courteous, to have "*our life so calmly holy, so clear and transparent, so consistent and Christ-like, that all may know that we are His.*"[1]

[1] Rev. William Storrs.

CHAPTER II.

"A garden closed around,
Chosen and made peculiar ground,
A little spot enclosed by grace,
Out of this wide world's wilderness."

CHARITY IS KIND.

The Language of Creation—Of Redemption—Of Individual Experience—The Naval Officer—The Mother's Letter—The Solemnity of the Bible "*Blesseds*"—Well-diggers—Thomas Bilney—Mr. Anthony Norris Groves—The Tongue—Love a Vital Principle, making Kindness the Life-law of Holiness.

THE principle of love is ministration; it not only abstains from hurting and vexing, but does actual good. Its delight is to anticipate and fulfil the desires of others, naturally gladly making itself their servant; thoughtful, active, and sympathetic, it makes them its study, that it may learn how best to supply their necessities, mental or bodily. Thus charity is kind; ever reaching forth out of self, forgetful of self, working, living for others. The life of love consists in doing good, in making itself all things to all men, in pleading for them as for self; love's mission is to give out blessing.

How heartily does all creation, revelation, and the experience of mankind echo back this truth with regard to the Fountain-head of love! Our God is kind!

The earth, lighted by the spangled vault of heaven, clothed in verdure, peopled with its living myriads, and with its alternations of day and night, of summer and winter, testifies this. Scripture teaches us to examine into God's kind provision for the lesser works of His hand, and thence draw comfort and confident hope for the supply of all our need. "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.

Are ye not much better than they? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Again, how beautifully does God paint His watchful care, in confining the raging sea "with doors," that it may not destroy life; in sending rain, not only to bless man, but to refresh "the earth where no man is, and the wilderness, wherein there is no man;" in providing the prey for the lion, and his food for the raven, "when his young ones cry unto Him;" in decking the peacock, and preserving the eggs of the ostrich left unheeded in the desert sand. Good is it for us to examine into the kindness of God, not only in providing variety to meet our need and taste, but also in furnishing to each creature instinct, and the peculiar talents needed for its manner of life. Thus we find that in winter, when their natural food, vegetable productions, is wanting, snails, concealing themselves in ditches, are enabled to form, by a member called the foot and the viscid mucus which they secrete, a cavity large enough to contain their shells, formed of mud and leaves, and hermetically sealed against the atmosphere by a large portion of very white fluid, which sets into a solid paste like plaster of Paris. Here they stay till instinct tells them spring is come, respiration meanwhile ceasing. The head of the deer is furnished with a slit beneath each eye; thus it has four breathing or scenting holes,—valuable to it when fleeing from enemies, and to the Laplander useful in guiding him where to fix his winter quarters; since the deer never remove the snow unless they smell the moss underneath. The camel is provided with non-quickly absorbent receptacles for water, thus

fitting it for the dry deserts; and the humps of animals, belonging to countries that are subject to extremes of heat and cold, are of a fatty substance, which can be absorbed into the system when they are without food. We notice not the unceasing beating of our own hearts; yet God continually keeps them in action, for were He one moment to forget, we must die.

The one message of the Gospel revelation is, God loves you, poor sinner; and He proves it by effort, by giving Himself to you and for you, by living, by dying, for you, by ascending up triumphant over death, by preparing a place of glory for you, and by carrying on a work of sanctification in you. God has a fixed object before Him, and with unwavering kindness He makes all things tend together to further it; He desires to fit us for, and bring us to, glory. What He has done is a pledge of what He will do; He has died for us, He will give us glory, and whatever we need on our way to glory. Indwelling sin still fearfully taints the believer's soul, and hence in love He follows us, He tracks our steps, as it were, and blessing after blessing, or, if needful, stroke upon stroke, are sent us, that His purposes may not be disappointed. "We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." Love pricks the sinner's conscience, subjects itself to hard thoughts, if it may but win the soul; yet His manner of dealing is not to coerce, but to constrain; not to force, but to persuade.

Jesus, God incarnate, "the express image of His person," manifested the feelings of the Father's heart. He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." He ever went about doing good. He was anointed of the Lord "to

preach good tidings unto the meek: to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to comfort all that mourn." "God sent His Son Jesus to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Throughout His three years of mission-life, the ear of Jesus was ever open to listen to aught that interested others; His heart was always free to sympathise; thoroughly practical, a perfect man, not only did He give spiritual advice, but He also entered readily on worldly topics, sanctifying earth's meanest drudgeries. At all times, wherever He was, it was as God's messenger—no worldly cares, no selfish interests, ever enthralled Him. Amidst the thronging, noisy multitude He heard the cry of suffering, and stood still to relieve. No case of misery was ever passed unheeded in the street by Him. His voice and effort brought comfort to the weeping, childless widow. All the needy thronged around Him, and He soothed and healed them. His love did not merely pity; it never rested short of giving relief. After preaching to multitudes, and pressing on them the necessity of first feeding their immortal souls, He yet remembered their physical necessities, and, though Himself poor, needy, ofttimes homeless, He provided for them an abundant meal. Nor yet had He alone sympathy for the sorrowing; He joined the wedding-party, and graciously added a luxury to the well-furnished table. He, who had made the Sabbath for man, left also for His people a feast of remembrance; His thoughtful affection thus desiring to cheer them during His bodily absence, by the memory of His days on earth, and the assurance of His continued, intimate communion in spirit with each.

Again, the experience of man in all ages has been that God is kind. David, after a singularly chequered

career, testified, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." And to His saints He has ever kept His promise: "Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." From their birth to their death He has watched over them, daily loading them with gifts, bringing them blessings through human instrumentality—fulfilling, if possible, the very desires of their souls; He has followed them by His Spirit, never resting till the arrow of conviction wrought repentance unto salvation not to be repented of. Amongst innumerable cases proving this blessed truth, may the following excite more holy joy and thankful trust!—

A young naval officer, wild, thoughtless, and living altogether without God in the world, was once on shore at Jamaica, taking his full swing of liberty. Wandering far inland, he had forgotten ship, discipline, and all the restraints of duty, when he was suddenly arrested by the sound of singing, which seemed to proceed from a negro hut in the cane-brake. He stopped, listened, and caught the well-known air of a simple hymn, beloved by him in childhood. Stealing noiselessly to the door, he found the congregation enwrapped in all the characteristic fervours of a negro prayer-meeting. The young Englishman's heart reverted in a moment to his praying mother; he turned tearfully away, and went quietly back to his ship, for the time softened and humbled.

The trumpet call was next sounded in a louder key. He and a young companion were in the lawless habit of leaving their ship unperceived, and of going ashore to a negro ball, or some other wild entertainment. As soon as it was dark, they used to let themselves down by the

chains, drop into the water, and swim ashore, where a fresh relay of clothes was in readiness at some appointed place. On this particular occasion, he and his comrade had agreed that they should not wait for each other on landing; our officer struck off for shore, where he dressed, and went to his usual revelry: all went smoothly with him, but his friend did not appear. No matter, he must have missed the trysting-place, and gone elsewhere! At length he hurried to the beach on his return, swam off, climbed noiselessly up the ship's side by the chains, and was just going to creep stealthily down into his berth, when his attention was arrested by a group on deck. He stood aside to observe that grave cluster of officers and men; there was a motionless figure in the midst of them; the group divided, and he saw the dead face of his young companion. The poor lad had become entangled in the chains as he was letting himself down, and was drowned in the dark waters. A sailor had heard an unusual noise, and had looked over the ship's side—*too late, too late,* except to recover the lifeless body of the misguided youth!

But the time chosen by our officer for his return to the ship revealed his own delinquency; he was ordered under arrest to await an examination, and was confined in the meantime between two guns on the lower deck. The ship was immediately after under weigh for another port. She encountered a tremendous gale, and was in great peril. In the midst of the excitement, from his confinement, he hazarded some important suggestion, which caught the ear of the lieutenant. The remarkable seamanship and intrepidity revealed by it struck the officer's mind in a moment; he gave orders in accordance with the idea, and the ship was saved. The lieutenant

had the noble and honourable feeling to tell the story to his commanding officer, and the culprit was in consequence released from arrest.

All this while God's Spirit was striving to win his heart for Christ and for His service. God was dealing with him tenderly, as a father deals with a wayward and wilful child. There were great mental conflicts, but the world was as yet too tempting to be renounced.

Eager for active service, and preferring independent enterprise, after a while he accepted the command of a fine ship belonging to a rich Parsee merchant. His beautiful young wife sailed with him; but in a terrific storm, on the 4th of January, 1841, the ship was struck by lightning, and soon afterwards foundered. The main-topmast and main-mast head were shivered. It was at first hoped that the electric fluid had passed from the ship by the chain cables, but smoke was presently discovered pouring from the hatchway. Not a moment was to be wasted; the ship was hove to, the boats lowered, a small quantity of biscuit was flung into them, and then the sharp jets of flame breaking forth all over the deck, forbade the delay of another second, as the blowing up of the powder-magazine was momentarily expected. And so, in the midnight darkness, on a wild sea, eighty-seven human beings, two of them ladies, were lowered into the boats, the captain and the chief officer being the last to leave the burning decks. Then came the working of stern economy as to provisions; the allowance was one-sixth of a biscuit and about two wine-glasses of water to each person. After a while, a few shell-fish were scraped together from the shore of a desolate island, sometimes visited by the Malays, whose smouldering fires testified

to their recent presence; and then the day's fare, for twelve days, rose to the luxury of half a biscuit.

The smoke of the fires had added another dread to their miseries, as an attack from these pitiless pirates of the seas was now apprehended. At last the long-boat, containing our officer and his wife, with forty-two others, reached the mouth of the Bornean river, wind and tide setting them in with no power of resistance. A native pilot soon boarded them, and gave them up in Borneo Proper to the power of the Sultan. He soon stripped the poor outcasts of all they possessed, and fed them insufficiently with the most wretched food; their boat was broken up, and every scrap of iron-work carried into the Sultan's palace. Time passed on; month after month was dragged away in hard captivity, the heartless chief meanwhile deluding them with promises he never kept; at length the captain's wife gave birth to an infant in a miserable out-building, with not a civilised comfort about her. But God was very gracious, very pitiful, and of tender mercy, and the poor young mother and her little captive daughter prospered as though they had been lapped in luxury and cradled in down.

On the 5th of August, an exciting rumour began to circulate; it was whispered that an English schooner was anchored in the roads. Days of suspense elapsed, and it at last transpired that Rajah Brooke had received intelligence of the captives in Borneo, by means of a few pencilled words intrusted to the crew of a piratical prow. A detached party of the captives had been allowed to go off in native prows on the 23rd of May, while our captain and his immediate companions had been retained as hostages. The boat party were beset by a fleet of piratical prows, which for three weeks blockaded the island on

which they had taken refuge. The chief officer intrusted a pencilled slip of paper to one of the pirates, to be delivered at Singapore; and this little missive was, by the ordering of God's gracious providence, delivered in safety at its destination, the first link, and certainly a very unpromising one, in the coming chain of deliverance. But He who can bend the unruly hearts of men, as well as bridle the wild waves of the sea, compelling them to work out His designs, impelled this poor ignorant pirate to execute his vital trust. An English schooner was at once sent to the rescue; but many difficulties had to be overcome, and much diplomacy to be employed, before all the captives could be gained possession of. By the 20th of September, though, all the lost ship's crew, save nine who had died from eating oysters and green mangoes after the days of extreme hunger, were rejoicing together in their deliverance at Singapore.

But even these extraordinary providential dealings failed to bring the captain to the foot of the Cross. Though his outward bonds were broken, he was a captive still; and, though outward deliverance had come, spiritual deliverance had yet to be effected. He had now lost all he owned in the world, and he and his wife had to begin life afresh. Bounties poured in upon them, and they were beginning to prosper again, when it pleased God, in His loving wisdom, to take from him his lovely partner. Almost broken-hearted, he returned to England; but the beloved child was also taken from him on the voyage; and then at last, with streaming eyes, he looked unto Him whom he had pierced, and God revealed Himself as his Father, reconciled in Christ Jesus, as the Hearer of prayer, the Healer of diseases, the Redeemer from all iniquity. He now cast himself, just as he was, at the

foot of the Cross, and he found that life and peace, pardon, joy, and love, were found there, and there only. Alive now unto righteousness, he sought and found sanctification as well as pardon, the spirit of holiness as well as the blood of atonement. And now he began to walk in newness of life, earnestly striving to glorify Him who had done so great things for Him. It was not a mere change of opinion, it was a change of heart and life; and the brave, reckless, wayward young sailor was now a lowly follower of a crucified Redeemer, loving much, because so much had been forgiven.[1]

And many such wondrous instances of our God's watchful care over His chosen, till they are safely folded in His home, are fresh, dear reader, in my own memory. To one only will space allow me briefly to refer:—

About the year 1831, a poor lone widow was confined in an Irish village of a boy, whose birth she survived but a few days. This widow was a stranger in the country. A native of Dumbarton, Scotland, she had married a navvy, whose tramps she had always accompanied. But he died in Ireland, whither he had gone for work, and she was there left, houseless and desolate; but God had raised up friends for the widow, and one had given her shelter, others had nursed her, others given her food; and when she was dying, they had promised to heed her baby, till he was old enough to mind himself. But her heart had been sorely overwhelmed at the thought of leaving him in a Romanist country, amongst the followers of its creed. For days her agony of soul was intense; and she had besought God, if she was taken, that her child should not be left.

[1] The Sunday at Home.

Her Saviour, though, had given her peace again. Why should she mistrust His power and will, who had cared for her and her husband when they were similarly circumstanced? After her death, the peasants were true to their word, and by turns sheltered the orphan, till he enlisted. One winter he had been admitted to a school, where he was taught a little reading, but no one ever spoke to him of the world beyond time, or of his own immortal soul. Truly, as a beast had he spent his years, eating and drinking, without any aim in life. His regiment being ordered to India, to assist in quelling the fearful mutiny of 1857, he passed through our station, and it pleased God there to answer the widow's prayer. Receiving a Bible from a Christian friend, with whom he had many long conversations on its precious truths, the message of redeeming love touched the untaught man, and brought him, a loving penitent, to the Saviour's feet. Speaking with that friend one evening, he asked leave to show something which he valued much; drawing out a letter from his bosom, he said, "Do you see that writing?—that's my mother's writing." Turning it, "Do you see that seal?—that's my mother's seal." He continued, "You'll think me the most hard-hearted wretch as ever was, to have let it rest so many years unopened. Why, I'm more than twenty-six, by some months, and this was written a few hours after I was born—so the woman said in whose house I was." On his friend's assuring him to the contrary, and adding, "I believe you have felt it a sacred thing," "I have! oh, I have!" he said, bursting into tears; "it has been a charm, a blessing to me, all my life through!" He then explained that, though able to read print, he could not read manuscript; and the letter was far too precious to trust

to the perusal of a stranger; "but if you'll read it to me, I'll love to hear your voice tell me what my mother says."

This simple, beautiful farewell to her boy contained a brief sketch of their history, and ended with an expression of firm trust in the kindness and faithfulness of her covenant-keeping God. "I have now not one fear in leaving you; Jesus will be a gude Shepherd to my ain bairnie, and I shall see thee again." She then told him how he could join her—how share the salvation Jesus had died to procure for him. And though she was leaving him penniless amongst strangers, even without a Bible, for with that even she had, in her last necessity, been compelled to part, she felt confident in God's good-will; she knew not how, and where, God would lead him to a knowledge of the truth, but she felt sure that that time would come; she *knew* he would be a folded one in the same happy home; she *knew* that she and her baby would cast their crowns at the same feet, and know and rejoice with each other through all eternity.

The soldier listened eagerly, and was much strengthened by his mother's prayers for, and her confidence regarding, him. More than twenty-six years had gone by, and now that the praying one was gone, her prayer was fulfilled.

Next day he told his friend that he had gone back to the barracks to pray, and as he had been keeping the midnight watch, a voice whispered to his soul, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." "And I did; and my greatest hunger was to know God had forgiven my sins; to be quite sure that I was safe, under the same Shepherd as my mother spoke of. And by and bye it seemed I heard again, 'I have blotted out all thy transgressions

for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' And I knew it was Jesus who forgave me; for, you know, you told me that text the other day, and showed me all clear, how no one but He could forgive sins."

How sweet it is to trace throughout his course the loving, ever-guarding hand of the Good Shepherd! Why should that mother's letter have been carefully kept during his childhood by the many Romanists amongst whom he lived—never lost, though he moved from house to house? How, too, is the guiding hand of the same overruling God seen in the preservation of the letter, after it came into the hands of the illiterate soldier! It is hardly natural for a young person to preserve so reverentially a memorial of one he never saw. No, dear reader! his course was marked out by One who had died for him, and who, having set His seal on him, had chosen him from the beginning to be His own for ever. His "sheep can never perish;" sometimes they seem, to sight, to stand alone; sorrows overwhelm, temptations overcome them; all hope for them seems lost. But why are we fearful for those whom Jesus loves? Is He not watching them? Is He not ordering their path, either through sunshine or shade? Yes, "*So* He bringeth them unto the haven where they would be."

Thus have we seen God's revealed character, "Charity is kind," borne out and verified in His creation and providences; feebly, but very feebly, have we touched on this soothing, blessed assurance; it will take all our life, in time and eternity, to know its fulness. But surely each of us, in looking back on past years, must find enough there to give us confidence in our Guide, and enable us from the heart to say, "I know not the way I am going, but well do I know Him, and that is all I need."

And now, may the Spirit of God teach us what is the Father's will regarding us in this point, and whilst enabling us more clearly to understand the extent of kindness He requires, give us obedient hearts henceforth more resolutely to act up to the same! The character of our kindness must be of the same as His who went about doing good. If we would be kindness personified, we must be living for others continually—thoroughly unselfish; to do them good for Christ's sake, and as Christ's representatives, must be our life's aim, and our life's realised work. And many a special blessing cheers the self-chosen path of self-sacrifice—of true, God-like kindness. Would that we more truly appreciated that word of Jehovah's, "Blessed!" "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich." Surely it is worth any cost to win it! If God be for us, who can be against us? If God call us blessed, what if man speaks ill of us? How awfully important is it for each of us to lay before us the promises of blessing, and look well to it that we are not trifling with our kind and long-suffering God! A promise is not to be lightly passed over; it imposes a solemn responsibility. May God, the Spirit, grant us grace fully to lay hold of those which are held out to cheer us onward in the path of Christian kindness!

Believing reader, we can, from experience, avow the truth of the word, "Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee!" He is our rock, our joy, our all, and we feel that "in Him we live, and move, and have our being,"—that without Him we can do nothing. But the inspired message continues, that the blessed ones are doubly blessed; for they, rejoicing midst the trials of the wilderness-journey in the strength and companionship of their God, work while they walk, in order to soften

the hardships of the pilgrimage to other travellers. True, we cannot restore the dead, nor heal the sick, nor bind up broken hearts; true, we cannot exert any visible personal influence in most of the cases of sorrow we meet; true, we cannot move the veil which parts spirit from spirit, and make the hearts we love feel all our gushing affection—our keen interest in their welfare; true, we cannot bear for any that aching realisation, that "Vanity of vanities" is the true motto of all that is mortal —that fading away is the fate of all that is earthly; true, each must bear his own burden, and yet that command is no mockery, "Bear ye one another's burdens;" true, there is a cross in every lot, and yet sympathy may lighten them. If we cannot bear all their sorrows away from our beloved, we may, nay, we are commanded to, weep with them. If they must be scorched by the desert sun, parched by the desert's aridness, sorely distressed with the raging wind, worn, weary, and discouraged by the tempest, we may at least, banding in love together, shorten the "little while" by heavenly communion; we may strengthen, gladden, and urge on those who journey with us, and we may leave in the wilderness "footprints" which may help those who come after us. We may dig wells in the dry and thirsty land; we may prepare the earthly cisterns, and then, looking heavenwards for rain from above to fill them, shall surely not be disappointed. May ours be the blessedness of those "who, passing through the valley of Baca," thus "make it a well" for others as well as for themselves, "the rain also filling the pools!" If believers carried the needs of others more in their hearts, they, too, might be continually doing good, like Jesus. They can always pray, even when strength or opportunity is

wanting, for open effort. Reader! have you never known the impulse, when walking behind a complete stranger, to pray for him? Many, whose chief life-mission work consists of prayer, little know how they are digging wells in the desert for a sick, a captive, an erring, a weak, a tempted, a faithful, or a dying fellow-pilgrim! God graciously gives to them the heavenly rain which, unseen by them now, they yet believe to *have* fallen; and the saved sinner, the reclaimed wanderer, the once-stumbling believer, or the strengthened saint, shall, in the last day, be to them a crown of rejoicing indeed!

Charity is kind. It has a ready sympathy for all in their needs and interests; their projects and labours, their wishes and their joys, are warmly entered into, as well as their fears, their sufferings, their afflictions; and by this keen interest a hold is gained on affection, and gratitude, and trust, which the believer gladly uses to urge his message home. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" should be the badge of the servant, as it was of his Master. Jesus spoke the truth to all who came to Him; He never shunned declaring to them faithfully the whole Gospel of God. And love caught from Him cannot allow any to pass unwarned; it must tell of Jesus and the resurrection. This anxiety for the souls of others is one of the first effects of true conversion; as we find Andrew immediately went and told his brother Simon, and Philip Nathaniel, that they had found Christ. So also with Thomas Bilney, in the reign of Henry VIII. After many questionings of spirit, and deep anxiety of soul, the perusal of Erasmus' Greek Testament was the means of revealing to him the truth as it is in Jesus. "He saw that all his travail and

fasting, and purchase of indulgences, were only so much running out of the right way. 'Jesus Christ saves,' he exclaimed; 'yes, Jesus Christ saves!'" Not long had this sublime lesson of Jesus Christ filled him with joy, before he fell on his knees and exclaimed, "O Thou, who art the truth, give me strength that I may teach it, and convert the ungodly by means of one who has been ungodly himself." After this prayer his eyes shone with the holy ambition which had been kindled in his heart. He gathered his friends, and placing his finger on the words in the Latin Testament, which had been new life to his own soul, he stirred up many hearts by detailing his own experience. This seems to have been afterwards the system he regularly pursued in striving to win other souls to his Saviour. He would beg for a private interview with the individual whose salvation he was seeking, and, when they were quite alone, he spoke first of the goodness of God to His own soul; then, while his thoughts burned within him, he preached to his companion Jesus coming into the world to save even the chief of sinners, and rejoicing over the one that repenteth. Few turned away from these pleading, earnest, personal appeals of the "blessed martyr Bilney," as Latimer loved to call him. God had led him through the deep waters of much personal conflict, that he might have the deeper, the tenderer sympathy in dealing with other wounded and suffering spirits. For this sympathy he was very remarkable; having travailed in birth with his spiritual children till Christ was formed in them, he was then gentle as a nursing mother in cherishing them.

Bilney was present on the occasion of Hugh Latimer's delivering a discourse, in presence of the Cambridge University, on Philip Melancthon and his doctrines,

against which he vehemently declaimed. As he listened he became deeply interested, not so much in the lecture as in the lecturer. His heart yearned over the enthusiastic, but misguided, advocate of Romanism. He would grudge neither pains nor labour, might he but be the means of leading him to the truth. But how was it to be achieved? The chances were few, indeed, that *Latimer* would consent to give *Bilney* a hearing. The latter thought and prayed, and at last, uniting the wisdom of the serpent to the harmlessness of the dove, he hit upon a happy expedient. He went to the college where Latimer resided, and prayed him that, for the love of God, he would be pleased to hear his confession. Latimer was equally astonished and delighted, and flattered himself that his own discourse had been the means of converting one of the most determined of the Protestant party. He eagerly consented to the request, and the pale and slender figure of Bilney, upon his knees in lowly confession before the stalwart University cross-bearer, seemed an exemplification of the text, "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."

With touching simplicity Bilney now related the anguish he had once felt in his own soul, the mighty efforts he had used, alike by penances and by expenditure of monies, to obtain relief; he told how all was in vain while he followed the precepts of the Church, and how all was changed when he saw and understood that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He described the peace passing all understanding which had then been breathed into his soul, the spirit of adoption he had received, and the happiness he experienced in being able now to call God his Father.

Latimer listened, without suspicion, with deep and increasing interest. From time to time he would have spoken, but the penitent continued. His voice, his simple, genuine declarations, penetrated the confessor's heart like a two-edged sword. The Spirit of God witnessed in his bosom to the truth and reality of what he heard; and when, at length, Bilney rose from his knees, Latimer remained seated, absorbed in thought.

After a while he stammered out a few words, and then Bilney drew nearer to him, his heart glowing with love, and God blessed his further instructions in the truth to completing the work begun. The proud and energetic priest became heart-broken as he realised how he had been waging war against the truth, and wept bitterly. Bilney comforted him with the comfort with which he himself had been comforted of God. "Brother," said he, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow."

Latimer became a new man. The energy of his character was softened by the gracious influences of the Spirit, at work in his heart.

Bilney became more than ever in earnest. He took but one meal a-day, and, delicate as his health was, allowed himself but four hours for sleep, that he might secure more time for the word of God and for prayer. Nor did he confine himself to study and to preaching. Accompanied by Latimer, he visited the madhouse, to soothe the frenzy of its miserable occupants with the melody of the story of peace. They found their way to the lazar-houses, and, regardless of the infection of the loathsome diseases to be met with there, waited upon the suffering inmates, tenderly wrapping them with their own hands in clean sheets, while they spoke to them of

Jesus. They entered the prisons, and discoursed to the malefactors, until some, converted like the thief on the cross, longed for the time of their death, that they might be with their Lord in Paradise. Bilney's chief work was prayer. Small in stature, and feeble in health, inferior also in power of intellect to some of his companions, his was that mighty faith which could remove mountains, by moving the Hand which moves the universe.

The Reformers longed to enlist in the service of the great cause an Augustine monk, named Robert Barnes, a man of learning and of power, who had been made prior of the monastery to which he belonged. There were, as with Latimer, especial difficulties to contend with, for Barnes was greatly flattered and sought after. A great crowd assembled daily to hear his classical lectures. He stood upon a pinnacle which made it difficult to approach him. Bilney, depending on a strength beyond his own, alone did not shrink from undertaking this onerous task. He spent days and nights in prayer, and then, with his simple, loving earnestness, drew near to the learned doctor. He was not disappointed; God gave him this soul also.[1]

That is not Christ-like charity which is kind only to the loving and gentle. There is selfishness in that love; rather are we called on to show kindness, by deed, word, look, manner, or prayer, to as many as we possibly can. For each soul Jesus died, and, therefore, however naturally repulsive, however depraved, however circumstanced, for each ought new sympathies to be enlisted, according to opportunity and strength.

[1] England's Daybreak.

Anthony Norris Groves was brought up, without regard to expense, by deeply-attached parents; on leaving school, he learnt chemistry in London, also practising dentistry, and walking the hospitals. At the age of nineteen, his talents were so conspicuous, and so faithfully exerted, that he was established in a lucrative practice at Plymouth, on his own account. There he devoted himself to many scientific subjects, and was a leading member of the Athenæum, in which he was much appreciated. It was at this place that he was first brought to a saving knowledge of Christ, shortly before his marriage. Henceforth catholicity of spirit and entire devotedness to God's work, everywhere and in all things, were his chief characteristics.

While fully engaged in professional practice at Exeter, he was in the habit, during the months of his mother's last illness, of setting off, every Saturday afternoon, for Hampshire, where he arrived in the middle of the night, so as to take his turn in watching her, returning early on Monday. One distant relative he brought up as a younger brother, taught him his profession, and ultimately gave him his practice. He provided also for another son of the same family, and the sister he adopted from the age of three years, and afterwards took her with him to India. But his Christian benevolence was by no means confined to his relatives,—many strangers experienced the same friendly aid and heartfelt sympathy. An interesting instance of this occurred at Plymouth. When visiting the workhouse, he became acquainted with a mason's boy, who, from an injury received in falling from a ladder, had become completely deaf. This individual was the afterwards well-known Doctor Kitto. Some of the boy's writings, found on scraps of paper,

convinced Mr. Groves that he was gifted with a mind superior to his circumstances, and, with the aid of several gentlemen, he succeeded in getting him educated; maintaining him, during the years in which he could do nothing for himself, as if he had been a member of his own family. Afterwards Mr. Groves had him taught printing, and paid a considerable sum to get him employment. He had for a time the charge of the mission-press at Malta; and when, not liking the employment, he returned to England, Mr. Groves again received him into his house; not finding any suitable provision for him, he afterwards took him to Bagdad. To very many souls he was at that time a blessing, through the grace of God, all of whom testified to the consistency and spirituality of his walk, and his uncommon hospitality.

The sense of the unity of God's family made Mr. Groves indifferent as to the denominational differences of Christians; with all he worshipped, rejoicing in a spirit of liberty. Though belonging to those who bear the name of Plymouth Brethren, his faith simply rested in Gospel truths, and he held with union and communion among all who possess the common spiritual life of the redeemed. Soon after his marriage, his mind became exercised about the right use of property, from the study of God's word, and, with the consent of his wife, he dedicated first a tenth, then a fourth, to the Master's service. But he could not rest so long as any was held back, and after years of prayerful thought, determined to give up himself to the work of God in heathen lands. In 1829, having forsaken country, house, friends, wealth, he sailed with his wife, children, and Kitto, for Petersburgh, whence they proceeded midst many hardships to Bagdad. There he laboured as pastor, schoolmaster, and surgeon, with

deepest interest, till he lost his wife, in an awful visitation of the plague, during which 4000 died daily in the town.

Famine and war ensued, but the man of God stood unshrinkingly at his post, pleading with God for the devoted city, and, having received help for himself, boldly going forth as the re-dispenser of the same to the needy. At one time he would be found visiting the plague-smitten ones; at another, in the midst of falling houses, striving to rescue the property of the resident from destruction; again, caring for poor outcast children; at all times speaking of the things of the kingdom to those around; seeming "the only man alive in the midst of the awe-struck inhabitants."

In 1833, the way as to Gospel testimony being much shut up at Bagdad, Mr. Groves set out with a Captain Cotton for India. On the way, the latter was dangerously ill; night and day did Mr. Groves nurse him, as a brother beloved. On arriving at Bombay, he was commissioned to visit Tinnevelly, and seek to persuade a missionary there to yield a point on which much angry questioning had been excited. The man of love succeeded in his embassy; and thence journeyed through much of the vast country, seeking men and means to establish a mission on the eastern coast. Everywhere he sought to tell of Christ, impressing on all he met, what a Roman Catholic servant expressed, "Who, that can read, cannot see that yours is the truth?" "His warmth, his love, his amazing energy," struck all; and the fact that he was a *proved* man of God, who had jeopardied his worldly interests, and even his life, in seeking to promote the cause of the Redeemer in the world, gave his words a fuller power.

In order to obtain the needful help for his contemplated mission, Mr. Groves sailed for England, where he arrived in December 1834. God graciously blessed his efforts there, and on the Continent, and again this faithful servant stood on heathen ground: Chittoor, near Madras, was the scene of his labours; and here, acting as ever on his life-principle, "where Christ unites, nothing should divide," he gave to all Christians the right hand of fellowship, whilst unweariedly seeking the conversion of the heathen. It was ever a leading desire of his heart, not to present to God of that which had cost him nothing, and by every means to make the Gospel of God without charge; hence his field of work was large, and the burden heavy. Thus did his life ever confirm the testimony of his lips: "The exaltation of Jesus is the saint's proper work and true glory; and, be always assured, the tree that is most loaded with God's fruit will bend its head most lowlily towards the ground . . . To be of any use in the midst of the most blessed opportunities of service, the soul's living in *holy, happy communion with God is essential; I feel, through life, opportunities are not the things needed by us, but grace to* USE THEM GRACIOUSLY *when presented* . . . How ought we to follow Him in our tenderness one to another, seeing He has borne so *much* from us! . . . I feel there is no happiness but in the measure of our consecration to Him, and receiving everything from Him."

One trait in Solomon's virtuous woman bears on our subject, applying equally to both sexes: "In her tongue is the law of kindness." Is this true of us? Are we quick ever with "the soft answer which turneth away wrath?" Is it our delight ever to put in a kindly word of others, specially of those who are under a cloud, pos-

sibly deservedly? Do we always shun the last approach to a hard and bitter speech, which "speaketh like the piercings of a sword," and, rankling in the heart of a hearer, may cause a lifetime of misery? Is ours always the courteous manner and language of true love, of which worldly politeness is an imitation? Some Christians have a different bearing for intimates and strangers, for home and society; deeming that the familiarity and freedom of constant intercourse allow of roughnesses in manner and speech, which would be changed into polished, perhaps elaborate, suavity to strangers. But, surely, such is not the spirit of kindness here referred to.

> "Let love through *all* our actions run,
> And *all* our words be mild."[1]

We cannot be too kind, too attentive, too careful in avoiding uttering anything which may jar on another's feelings. Christian love bears the test of knowledge and extreme intimacy. It walks through the world as through "the wards of an hospital,"[2] dropping its tender words, its heartfelt sympathy everywhere; standing still, like Jesus, if possible to give more special heed at times. The poor, the needy, the friendless, the oppressed, all these find a place in the believer's heart. Money, time, influence—all are eagerly laid out for them: even the creature finds mercy at his hands. His mouth "is a well of life, and his lips feed many." Are we not constrained to confess, that as yet we have apprehended but very little of this lovely kindness? Does not memory sometimes cause a bitter pang to our heart, by bringing to our recollection the unkind word, the neglect, the misused opportunities, with which we offended against

[1] Watts. [2] Sir J. E. Buxton.

some to whom we can never more on this side Jordan show kindness, or express contrition? Alas! is it not still a daily confession that we have broken the law of love? Do not those around us constantly suffer from our impatience, selfishness, and severe words? And, if so, how must this damp our influence for good!

Dear reader, hitherto we have not made this law of kindness, of going about doing good, sufficiently our one great aim in life; we have strangely, sadly forgotten our Master's parting words, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Perfect love is pure, holy, unspotted from the world. For the sake of others who may be influenced by example, the believer's walk must be humble, prayerful, thoughtful. A stumble, a fall, may be forgiven him—the Lord may bring again the sheep that was driven away—but, oh! who knows the consequences in another's experience, from having sin brought, as it were, nearer to them by evil example? Charity is kind; it tries to make the wilderness-journey smooth to fellow-travellers; it strives to win to the narrow way those who are yet in sin's highway; it lives high, near to its source—God, that it may keep ever His standard, and shed a holy halo, a heavenly influence, on all around.

This walking with God, and realising the believer's indissoluble union with Him, was the source of Paul's holy, glad confidence: "I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ." And such might be the assurance of every child of God, but our low attainments in the school of Christ, and the too often indulgence of un-Christlike tempers, fetter us much and frequently.

Oh! for grace to remember such passages as these:

"He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' In the knowledge of Christ's love to us is bound up all that can ease the sinner's burdened soul—all that can set him free from sin's trammels; and in the attainment of like love, in measure, consists all his work henceforth below. When love to Him is the supreme passion of any heart, that soul loses all self-will; the fulfilment of His will is the one reigning desire, to aid in bringing which about every pulse throbs, every effort is made.

"If life be long, I would be glad,
That I may long obey;
If short, then I'd be still more glad,
To soar to endless day."

The more the old man is crucified with Christ, the more will this self-emptied love be ours; it is a fruit foreign to earth, it comes only from above; it is an exotic, and therefore ever needs watchful tending, lest it should die altogether, or degenerate into a mere fashion of benevolence, almsgiving, and good works. Heavenly kindness is spiritual; it is the Spirit of Jesus, inhaled from Him, and, wherever it blossoms, its work is not only that of the good Samaritan, to soothe bodily or mental distresses; it knows that is poor happiness, which has no hope beyond time, and therefore lovingly, faithfully it pleads; it wrestles with souls, and rests not till they are safe at home. Believers need as much kindly influence brought to bear on their souls as the unconverted; perhaps this is one reason why the standard of Christian attainments is not higher, because we so little provoke one another to love and good works.

How often, alas! are we "a comfort," not only to sinners, through our inconsistencies and constant falls, but also to believers, through our low appreciation of the beauties of Christ, and His requirements of His people, or our sluggishness in laying hold so feebly of the truths our understandings have compassed.

Beloved reader! it must not be thus with us henceforth. Ours may not be the marked call, and lovely self-abnegation of all that earth holds attractive to flesh and blood, which led the loving, saintly MARTYN to forsake home, country, friends, distinctions, even his very bride-elect, for Christ's sake; but, oh! the Lord requires of each the same overflowing love, the same walk of holiness, the same desire and effort to spend life in digging wells by the wayside for the needy.

"O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; Send Thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before Thee: Grant this for Thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."[1]

[1] Prayer-book.

CHAPTER III.

" From the far-off fields of earthly toil,
A goodly host they come,
And sounds of music are on the air—
'Tis the song of the Harvest-home.
The weariness and the weeping,
The darkness has all passed by,
And a glorious sun has risen—
The Sun of Eternity.

One had climbed the rugged mountain-side;
'Twas a bleak and wintry day;
The tempest had scattered his precious seed,
And he wept as he turned away.
But a stranger hand had watered
That seed on a distant shore,
And the labourers now are meeting,
Who never had met before.

And one—he had toiled amid burning sands,
When the scorching sun was high;
He had grasped the plough with a fevered hand,
And then laid him down to die.
But another, and yet another,
Had filled that deserted field,
Nor vainly the seed they scattered,
Where a brother's care had tilled.

Some, with eager step, went boldly forth,
Broadcasting o'er the land;
Some watered the scarcely-budding blade
With a tender, gentle hand.
There's one—her young life was blighted
By the withering touch of woe;
Her days were sad and weary,
And she never went forth to sow,—

But there rose from her lowly couch of pain
The fervent, pleading prayer;
She looks on many a radiant brow,
And she reads the answers there!
Yes; sowers and reapers are meeting,
A rejoicing host they come;
Will you join the echoing chorus?—
'Tis the song of the Harvest-home!"

CHARITY ENVIETH NOT.

Jesus a Lover of *Shared* Blessings—Varied Growths, but One Root—The Loving Child—The Believer's Satisfaction in the Joy of his Lord—Asking wiser than Envying—Jealousy amongst Co-workers—The Master's Legacy—Bible Examples of Hate and Love—Vanity of Unlawful Objects of *Envy*—Flowers in the Military Hospital—The Contented Believer—The Source of Peace.

"GOD that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth," is infinitely beyond all feeling of envy; yet in the person of the incarnate God Christ Jesus, how fully is His character of love preserved according to the definition we have now to consider, "Charity *envieth not.*" There is no self-seeking in Him, no confining the ministry to Himself; love, and tender, true-hearted interest in others, actuates His every action. He chooses twelve, afterwards seventy, yea, all whose hearts His mercy has constrained, to be co-workers with Him; and the seen fruit, the known success, granted to many of them, excites only joy and thankfulness in the heart of Him who was content to labour on with so little immediate answer to His efforts. To His disciples He even granted a share in His power of working miracles; and wondrous as was His loving condescension when on earth, more wondrously yet is the same spirit manifested, now that He is enthroned amidst the unutterable glories, the innumerable hallelujahs of heaven.

"When He lived on earth abased,
'Friend of sinners' was His name;
Now, above all glory raised,
He rejoices in the same;
Still He calls them brethren, friends,
And to all their wants attends."

He Himself gladly prepares for His redeemed ones a place in His Father's home, not as servants, but as friends, and left on record the assurance, which gave nought but joy to His unenvious heart, "the Father Himself loveth you."

Still He invites all who will to join Him in winning souls, and promises to such a rich share of His own reward. In these two points, His desire for the fellowship of His followers, and for their partnership with Him in His work, do we chiefly mark in the Lord His own example set forth as the personification of that charity which "envieth not." To this standard it was His own free will and pleasure to raise them. Love delighted in thus showering blessings. Yet even with Emanuel there was little room for envy, for alone, of all men, has He walked through this tainted atmosphere with unspotted garments. With Divine power at His command, and every power of mind perfect, as He moved along, many might envy Him (probably the secret of much of the hatred He excited took its rise from this), but He could envy none, for all He saw to love was the work of His own hands—an emanation from His own Spirit; and even it, alas! was defiled. And so will it be with all His glorified ones in the New Jerusalem: each will be perfect after His kind, for, seeing Him, they will be like Him; there will be no cause for, no temptation to, jealousy there.

But here, having "gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us," the evil one will ever be striving to sow and force in us the un-Christlike passion of envy. Would that we more dreaded this insidious foe! more prayerfully and watchfully guarding our hearts. Awfully sounds the Apostle's words, "He that hateth his brother is a murderer!" and the root of hate is envy. How little we realise that jealousy is the sin of murder in its conception; otherwise there would be less self-congratulation and boasting on being only a committer of "little sins." How differently does the law of God judge sin from man's judgment! Departure from a known command is guiltiness; be the sin an open or hidden one, it places the sinner under condemnation; and just as "life is made up of little things," so love proves itself in little as well as great efforts to please. God is love, and all that is not love is antagonistic to His very nature; therefore, where envy is, there is a spark of the devil's kindling, a seed of his own hellish nature. Envy cannot be where the heart's love is set upon Christ, for, as Keble says,

> "Thou art as much His care, as if beside
> Nor man nor angel lived in heaven or earth."

Envy originates from selfishness; but in God's vineyard there is room and to spare for every worker without jealousy. Who, that in any degree realises the value of souls for whom Christ died, and the immense number still hurrying on unsaved towards eternity, but must thankfully rejoice to see new workers added to God's ministering ones? This is, perhaps, *the* greatest danger to those privileged to work for Him; there is a tendency to become wrapt up in their own little sphere of

labour; it is looked on as "*my* work," rather than *His* work.

Now, if "the love of Christ" influence the heart and life, *His joy* will be our dearest desire, and to see anything add to it will be enough for us, whether we be the channel of increase or not. Of course, the deeper our love, the deeper will be our affectionate anxiety to prove our attachment; but surely such affection would not prove itself to be real, by a selfish littleness which rejoiced only if self were brought forward!

From the simplicity of a loving child, we may learn what ought to be the results of love to Christ; see it run to do the parents' bidding, or, unasked, carry them the footstool or needed comforts; and again, not always burdening with affectionate *effort*, see that same child sit for hours gently by their side, contented in their company, with the pleasure or duty they provide for it. When dainties of any kind are given it, how brightly and naturally the best is offered them—how sincerely forced on their acceptance! and in any gift received from others by the parents, how heartily does the child admire it, how warmly rejoice for them, how love those who pay attention to its parents!

So, if our love for Jesus be sincere, how *can* we envy? Because, having set our affections on things above, we shall be comparatively indifferent to our earthly portion, better pleased that others should taste its blessings than ourselves, who can so well afford to be without them; and, in spiritual things, knowing that we *are* giving Him as much as *we* can, we shall rejoice to find others adding to His joy, assured that there is, in His treasury, abundance of love and grace to fill and overflow every heart, and, in the world, room enough for all who will work,

without one taking another's place. The precious promise, "your labour is not in vain," "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," given to each labourer, is enough to a truly loving one. He who giveth the increase permits one to sow, another to reap; there is therefore no real basis for pride, seeing that any proof of devotion can only be given through the strength He Himself lends; and as the talents exerted by various workers are His gifts, so can each only give according to what God has given him. Man may therefore extol this or that work, and envy the labourer the privilege of having it; but since God gave the special talents to the workers employed, and the call to that work, they no more are therein proving love than those may do whom He has called to devote their time to secular work, or altogether laid by in pain and weakness. Each may love to the full (because loved fully), and prove that love by simply living to God's glory, wherever placed. "Go thy way," was the Master's word to the cleansed men, who in their loving gratitude would fain have stayed with Him.

Our love is a question between God and our own soul; from Him we must seek guidance, and, having learnt His will, undeviatingly, trustfully, gladly, love will obey it; in so doing ofttimes envy may attack us, imputing false motives; and when active labour is withheld, Satan will try to lure to disobedience by urging that *it* is the alone, or the greatest, proof of devotion. The believer's path seems not always clearly defined, and the wiliness of his heart, naturally prone to evil, makes it doubly needful that he should continue instant in prayer, "Lord, have mercy upon me, and *incline* my heart to

keep Thy laws," and give me a clear, keen sight to discover Thy will.

"I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
And wipe the weeping eyes;
And a heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathise.

Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoe'er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate;
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord on whom I wait.

I ask Thee for the daily strength,
To none that ask denied,
And a mind to blend with outward life,
While walking at Thy side;
Content to fill a little space,
If Thou be glorified.

In a service which Thy love appoints
There are no bonds for me,
For my secret heart is taught the truth
That makes Thy children free;
And a life of self-renouncing love
Is a life of liberty."[1]

When with humble love we can look up continually and feel that in God's appointed way, whether by prayer, lip, or life, or all together, we are walking in His own Spirit, then shall we heartily rejoice in the talents and

[1] Waring.

opportunities granted to others. Their being deprived of any would not enhance us; God is able to make all grace and all-sufficiency abound towards each child; each may have as much as he wants: rather, therefore, than envying others, would it not be wise of him to ask the Father, "from whom cometh every good gift," to endue him with the gifts he desires? ever remembering this, that the very dissimilarity in characters and graces tends to make God's work more beautiful by variety, and more perfect through one supplying another's need.

There is, perhaps, a tendency to envy those whose work is alongside of, and intermingling with, and perhaps more extensive than, ours; whilst yet we deceive ourselves by admiring the memoirs and works of those far removed from us, or not clashing with ours: and, again, how often natural graces awaken jealousy rather than generous praise. Oh! if we would but remember that such are God's loan to them, and that of those that have more shall more be required, would not the sense of the solemnity of the trust reposed in them subdue all envy? If, here, the gifts of others excite envy, how, think we, will it be in heaven, where each saint shall be radiantly reflecting, "without spot or wrinkle," the image of Him who is "altogether lovely?" Oh, rather, brother, let us seek to discover what talents our Lord has committed to us, and in expending them faithfully we shall find no room for envy, but gratefully strive to follow every blessed example which we trace to be a copy from Him we love and long to be like, giving to them the right hand of fellowship, strengthening them, as together we prepare the "way of the Lord!"

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." "If we love one another,

His love is perfected in us." God created man in His own image; fearfully as sin has since marred the likeness, there yet remains in each human form the breath of God—an immortality of being either for weal or woe. Dear reader! we, who were once dead, hath *He* quickened; and shall we not henceforth have a fellow-feeling of sympathy for all our brethren, be they yet in darkness, or admitted into oneness with our Head? As we look on each form, shall not our heart be drawn to it by the remembrance that our Elder Brother died for it, as much as for us?—that, if in darkness, His heart yearns for its love, as once for ours? Christ has left on record, that His love for His Church is deep and intimate, even as that between husband and wife. Brother, that Church is made up of individuals, and shall we bear a spark of envious feeling to any of those so dear to Him, our Saviour? Individually assured of the possession of Jesus' love, and craving further for love and esteem from man, shall we not seek it by giving it, and be gladly content with what He puts it into His people's heart to give us, even though others may have the power of engaging more? It were wise and happiest to obey ever the command, "Thou shalt not covet," for envy is like a canker-worm, eating the roots of all joy, "as rottenness in the bones."

Satan knew how closely self is entwined into man's very being, when, as an allurement to Eve from the path of untainted purity, he promised, "Ye shall be as gods." Immediately envy sprang up in her heart; and, that she might apprehend gifts hitherto possessed only by others, she took of the fruit, daring God's only command to her. Again, how fearfully does the story of Cain witness the natural alliance in man's heart to this hateful passion of

the evil one! With him the attainment of the blessing was lawful; yet, from indolence or aversion to God's command, he fell short of it, and then, instead of condemning himself, he envied him who had attained, and unbridled envy with rapid growth matured into murder. Instead of, like Cain, hating those who in talents or the spending of them are superior to ourselves, were it not better to follow the advice given to him by God Himself, and ourselves copy the well-doers? On the other side, how beautiful and unearthly was the love of Jonathan towards him whom he knew was destined to take from him his crown and kingdom,—shielding him ever from the murderous aims of his jealous father, drawing, consequently, even on himself that father's anger, and with admiring affection loving him as his own soul! Again, how truly was the glory of His Master enthroned in Paul's heart as his dearest desire—his one want! He who had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, so highly educated, endued with no common powers of mind, he thankfully rejoices in his converts standing side by side with him as fellow-heirs and fellow-ministers, even though many of them were poor and unlearned, and some preached only with a desire to outshine him. For himself he did not care; he was but the hand holding up the candle, desiring only that *it* should illumine the darkness.

The vanity of all unlawful objects of covetousness might suffice to make believers content with their hidden, laid-up treasure, when we see death call peremptorily away alike the prince from his luxury, attended by the first healing professors and medicines money can purchase, and the uncared-for pauper in the street. And when we place earth's distinctions and interests in contrast with

the good things of our Father's house, these baubles seem unworthy the envy of heirs of such an inheritance. But love takes a higher standard; not undervaluing those good temporal things which God giveth us richly to enjoy, love accepts them as tokens of present favour,—pledges and earnests of the promised future full unfolding of His purposes, of giving us a name and place better than of sons and daughters; as types of the blood-bought privileges of redemption.

I remember well flowers having thus been made the medium of leading an afflicted sufferer to joyful content with his lot. This man was a soldier, who, on his voyage to India, fell from the upper-deck to the hold, and received some dreadful internal injuries; which, however, did not at the time sufficiently affect him to cause his detention in Calcutta. The jolting up-country, however, in the military bullock-vans, brought on such agonising pain, that he was compelled to be left in one of the hospitals at B——. Lying on his charpoy for weeks, no dearer delight was his than to be brought a flower, with an accompanying word out of God's book. Often too weak and suffering to hear a voice or think much, one word was enough; and it was my constant privilege just to whisper to him such messages from our Father in heaven as "sons," "like Him," "see Him," "my Father and your Father," "my Father's house," "no condemnation." Seldom do I now look on a flower without memory's recalling the beaming joy on that poor sufferer's face, as he clasped his new flower, and, if able, repeated the message of the day. He often told me he envied none; he felt so sure that God's love was his, that he was better off than many free of pain, and rich in the world's good things. His flowers were proofs of God's

love, he said; his were made as beautifully as those put into a queen's bouquet, and God had ordered and watched their growth with equal care. "A *large* gift from you," he one day said, "would give me less pleasure than God's flowers." With the following lines, when able to speak, he always welcomed me with the flowers:—

"Oh, wherefore, wherefore were they made,
All bathed in sunny light,
All fashioned with supremest grace,
Upspringing day and night?

To comfort man, to whisper hope,
Whene'er his faith is dim,
For who so careth for the flowers,
Will much more care for him."

Love questions not whether God's gifts are equally distributed. Suffice to know that a Father's loving wisdom dictates, a Father's hand bestows them. For each soul He has paid the same price, and gratitude demands content. It ill becomes dust and ashes, when endued with grace and promised glory, to murmur because others may have more talents committed to them. It is because we so little live by faith, so seldom realise our talents as God's loan, so undervalue the trust of them, that we ever envy; talents entail responsibilities, and to him that hath shall more be given. Would we be more gifted, we must be found trading with what we have already received, and asking of Him from whom cometh every good and perfect gift. But He knows how often, when causes for envy are removed, pride takes its place, and therefore the loving, trustful child, whilst he freely, unreservedly lays bare his heart's desires to his Father, is content even if the answer be denial. Here, the wherefore may never be manifest, for—

" God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;"

though often at the time, or in future years, the sin which hid His hand may be discovered; but when we see face to face, all God's dealings with us shall stand out plain. He who knows the differences in characters, apportions to each the lot suited to fit him for his niche in the upper temple.

Dear reader! if truly our heart's desire was set chiefest upon attaining to the likeness of Him who is love, then should we ever welcome all that He ordains. No chance directs our daily walk, but God has planned each step of the way, each homely or social, secular or spiritual duty, each walk we take, each person we meet, each influence that in any way bears upon us; none of God's children can boast of more, none of less, than this; and, therefore, simply following the cloud ourselves, seeking to obtain from all persons and all things helps on our road, shall we not rejoice over any privileges likewise given to fellow-pilgrims? Shall we not sympathise with them in every token of *our* Friend's favour to them? His love is deepest towards those who partake most of His own desire for *shared* blessings.

There remains, then, nothing for the Christian to envy. How richly God strews our path with gifts, we often little realise till they are gone; generally accepting them as common, matter-of-course needfuls, and sorrows or lack of talents we see others possess as evils. Oh, for a more *natural* judgment in spiritual things! Love delights to give joy, and win to itself thankful, grateful appreciation. To deal faithfully and tell of faults, to refrain from giving, is painful, and yet often proceeds out

of the deepest love. And so with our Heavenly Father; His love gives out sorrow as well as joy, lack as well as plenty, because He sees the discipline needed; and He loves too truly, too wisely, to be over-persuaded to His children's detriment. Therefore are His afflictions as loving blessings as His joys; and if we saw all from the beginning to the end as He does, we could not desire for ourselves other, either of weal or woe, than He gives, seeing He dispenses just that needed for our future steps in sanctification. No other cross—no other path—would meet our necessity.

How deeply consolatory and satisfying is this assurrance, amid all the unsatisfying portions of this life! If He keeps from us the one we most yearn after, it is because we or he might idolise. If He directs to one place, when we would fain stay at another, it is because He has a work for us there, or we might idolise His *work* here. If He takes the friend we love, when other homes are unbroken, other friendships even temporarily unsevered, it is because of *His* love to our loved one, or His tender wisdom in helping us to transplant our affections from earth to heaven. If He blights early hopes, gives wearisome sickness, poverty, no apparent fruit to labour, it is still because He loves us.

"Love craves the presence and the sight
Of all its well-beloved,
And therefore weep we in the homes
Whence they are far removed;
Love craves the presence and the sight
Of each beloved one,
And therefore Jesus spake the word
Which caught them to His throne."[1]

[1] Rev. E. H. Bickersteth.

Charity thus cannot envy, because, as God is satisfied, so is it. Other pilgrims may have less danger in having their desires granted, or may have consequent spiritual trials to pass through. Charity envieth not; God rests in His love; and love inhaled, as it were, from Him, breathes His own Spirit, emulating His example. Thus it rests satisfied with His love to itself, rejoicing to know of His seeing of the travail of His soul in others, and those others happy in His favour, and the enjoyment of His good gifts.

"Welcome the crook, then, in thy daily lot,
The burden each successive morn supplies;
Welcome the uprooting from each favourite spot;
He builds too low who builds beneath the skies:
There dwells that Saviour who has died for thee,
And, where thy treasure is, thy heart should be."

CHAPTER IV.

"All hail the power of Jesu's name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Crown Him, ye martyrs of our God,
Who from His altar call;
Extol the stem of Jesse's rod,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
A remnant weak and small,
Hail Him who saves you by His grace,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Ye Gentile sinners, ne'er forget
The wormwood and the gall;
Go, spread your trophies at His feet,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To Him all majesty ascribe,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Oh, that with yonder sacred throng,
We at His feet may fall,
There join the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all!"

PERRONET.

CHARITY VAUNTETH NOT ITSELF.

The Humility of Jesus—Two Causes for Humiliation in Believers —Natural Pride—The Christian's Vaunt—The Double Insight —The Triple Chord of Praise—Redemption—The White Man's Friend—Sanctification and Glory—God's Personal Perfections —His Works—His Character—Duty of Believer to tell of God—His Confidence in Speaking—Source of his Power to win Souls—The Members of the Body must each glorify God —The Eye—The Hand—The Feet—Believers ought to sing Praises *to* God continually—The Worship of Heaven—Self-abasement induces universal Creature Respect, and readiness to admire where possible.

Most strikingly is the humility of Jesus, and the simplicity of His quiet life on earth, set forth in the memoirs of Him, written by those who, as Jews, had hoped He would have come as temporal king of Israel, and whose testimony, therefore, to His self-forgetful walk of ministering love is all the more powerful; having undertaken the great work of man's redemption, and of living awhile here as his Example, He laid aside all that would raise Him above man's condition—all that would keep the sinner away from His presence. He did not come down with heavenly glory, as the Almighty Deliverer, claiming royal distinctions, and, parading His infinite beneficence, calling for universal homage. Truly, as God, all power was His, and because no sin could defile Him, therefore He was marked with a holy dignity. But His miracles were all done, and His authoritative teaching given, in His unobtrusive itinerating journeys, and He continually

affirmed that His aim and delight were to glorify His Father; that, as man, He could do nothing of Himself; whilst He ever endeavoured to excite men's love towards that Father, by telling forth His love for them, as the Source of His own mission, the foundation for all redemption hopes. He took on Himself the form of man, sharing his temptations and infirmities; as the carpenter, the brother of poor working men, He was known in Canaan; engaged in his father's trade, unrecognised as the promised Redeemer, probably marked only by His heavenliness of life and conversation, He spent the first thirty years of His life in a little village; then He came forth on His mission-work abroad, but still how simply, selecting for His first messengers men despised of the world, poor and unlettered! His actions were a living testimony of His love, for He spent Himself, in life and death, for His people. He did not even live apart, as leader of the few who believed on Him, but as the "friend of publicans and sinners" was known.

Oh, to have this love fulfilled in ourselves! To be ever looking out of self up to Christ, and on our fellow-men; to be less absorbed in our own individuality and experience; to have our boast exercised of other than self! God is love, therefore love in human hearts is of God; it is a part of Him put into them, giving thus a little sight of Him. And since He is also light, it follows that where He puts His love, there is also somewhat of His light, and that, showing the darkness of the natural heart, the selfishness of all that is not from Him, takes away all room for boasting, by revealing that we have nothing we can truly call our own but sin. Hence it is that "Charity vaunteth not itself." Realising that its being is given, its strength and beauty only preserved

through continual fresh supplies, it humbly, honestly, adoringly confesses, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord." "All my fresh springs are in Thee." "I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all; but Jesus Christ is my all in all." "I the chief of sinners am, but Jesus died for me." It can entertain no such proud thoughts as, "I am holier than thou;" it will not seek high places for itself, nor expatiate on its own attainments, sayings, or doings; but, "in lowliness of mind," having had revealed to it somewhat of its corresponding nature's filthy, hidden heart-depravity, it "will esteem others better than" itself; knowing, when in truth it is forced to admit seeing great sin in them, that the seeds of such evil fruit are in its own heart, and forced to admit against itself that its transgressions have been against light and knowledge, whilst with others it *may* have been otherwise, or they may have had palliating excuses.

Thus we see two reasons why believers cannot vaunt of their love; because it is borrowed, not their own, and because they have so little of it, amidst so much yet remaining of nature's selfishness. And we learn also the means by which more Christ-like love can be obtained; even a deeper insight, by the Spirit and the word, into Christ and into self. And, oh, may an ever-deepening sense of the former, whilst it humbles us, send us with renewed hope, and increased earnestness of desire and effort, to the foot of the cross! Assuredly it is the will of God to perfect our love, and here, therefore, we need only grasp the promise, "Ask, and it shall be given you;" and if, in daily life, we struggle to walk in this same love, then shall the same "mind be in us as was in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God,

thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Charity vaunteth not itself; lets not "the left hand know what the right hand doeth;" taking it as a matter of course — a kind of selfishness — to do anything for the beloved, in which number extensive Christian love includes all; for every soul is precious in the sight of its Creator, seeing He died for *all.* Love seeks not to attain a name for its works, but is content to bless like the angels (ministering spirits) unseen, unthanked. The principle consequent on love is ministry; there is, therefore, but the fulfilment of plain duty in copying Him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and, when we have done all, how fearfully short of Him must we come! what unprofitable servants we must be! Lawfully He claims our talents, and all we gain by trading with them, for they are only lent us, we holding them as His stewards; and His express desire is that, with these, we should supply the mental and physical needs of His other creatures.

Charity vaunteth not itself; but we must remember that it is alien to our hearts, in which self and pride naturally hold sway; and, therefore, those who have been pardoned, and are now undergoing the renewing process of sanctification, must know many struggles ere they become "clothed with humility." Even when pride of rank, wealth, talent, or beauty are overcome, religious work and experience afford new food for self-vaunting; for Satan knows how to change virtues them-

selves into sins, and thus gilds often the downward path, so that the reclaimed sinner backslides even whilst he deems himself advancing. Little real ground as there is for pride, seeing that the voice that gives the message may soon be silent in the grave, at best speaks only through lent power, a deceitful heart forgets the causes for humility, and, with subtlety, inwardly rejoices over and glories in its acknowledged power in speaking the word, in giving utterance to beautifully expressed truths, so that hearts are impressed, convicted, and, it may be, saved. Danger thus stalks around the believer unceasingly from foes within and without; a treacherous heart, lifted up within itself, makes a man too often by nature his own God; he revels in his own goodness, and dreams ambitiously of his own future; and though the ransomed one's hopes, and motives, and character, in part are changed, he is still in the world, subject, not only, like his Saviour of old, to infirmities, but, alas! to sins; still bearing about with him a defiled body with depraved lusts, which calls for continual keeping under and bringing into subjection; and from the heart's high thoughts of itself, which render incompetent its powers of self-judgment, his alone safe Guide is the Spirit, who, by the word and conscience, is ever ready to reveal the present state of the soul, compared with what God requires of it.

Since, therefore, pride is a besetting sin of all, though it arises from various causes, and clothes itself in divers garbs, the Christian will be on his guard against it, and strive to keep himself and his duties in the background. He will "try to be a voice, not a name,"[1] as

[1] Rev. Frank Owen.

was prophesied of John the Baptist, and repeated by himself in retiring, loving modesty, which sought only to be known as the forerunner, the servant, of the coming Saviour, whose shoes he felt unworthy to loose,—"the voice of one crying in the wilderness."

And now, dear reader, having seen that love cannot boast of itself, since it has only what it has received in gifts, and that it is set in the midst of so much of evil, let us look into the inference to be drawn from this negative description. If not of itself, it does make its boast of God,—it does speak good of its neighbour.

Love vaunteth of God; here surely is a theme for cherubim and seraphim, nay, rather for glorified sinners, for "there is a song which angels cannot sing, but we shall sing for ever and ever."[1] Here is a subject for boasting beyond human power of expression,—a cause for glorying in, which, if more fully known, a sight of perfection, which, if more vividly seen by faith, even through the glass, would extinguish all the lesser lights borrowed from Itself, and fill every mouth with its praise!

We saw above that, to attain to the love now our study, a deep and double insight is needed, into self and into Christ; let us lay this truth to heart—a true knowledge of personal depravity would sink us low in self-abhorrence and self-renunciation, and a view of the altogether loveliness of the Master would inspire us with admiration and devoted homage. Thus was it with Isaiah, whose strains of fervid eloquence, and unsurpassed soarings of ascriptive praise, followed a vision of the Lord, in which his own unworthiness had likewise been shown to him. No fellow-mortal can give us of

[1] Rev. Vincent Stanton.

the love he, through grace, has obtained; each must seek and obtain for himself. The joy of seeing God and being like Him, though reserved in its fulness for believers till they reach His home, is even now in part made known to them. True, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him;" yet He "hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." And though "in *His presence*" alone "is *fulness* of joy," and we shall only be "*satisfied*" when we awake after the resurrection, yet already, in the fulfilment of His word, "ye see Me:" we have a joy with which the worldling cannot intermeddle, a confidence nothing but our own faithlessness can remove, a source of admiring love which takes us out of self.

Perhaps there may be reckoned three principal causes for love to God, besides His temporal mercies,—redemption, sanctification and glory hereafter, and the glorious beauty of His own perfect being. When a sinner's heart has been pricked, and his lost condition revealed to him in its awful hopelessness, and when to such an one the good tidings of Calvary's cross have been told, through the Spirit's power, with saving effect, henceforth how deep must be the gratitude, how passionate the love, felt for such a Saviour! How will he delight, through the remainder of life, to tell of Him who called him "out of darkness into His marvellous light!" How constantly will he testify to all, that out of Christ he would have been for ever a ruined sinner, irretrievably lost! How will his tongue tell forth, "all the day long," the love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the triune God, who, with such wondrous compassion, have not only wrought out a scheme of redemption, but inclined his

heart, and saved him! How sweet the name of Jesus to his ear! How uppermost it will rest on his thoughts and lips!

There was a poor little native girl in Northern India, living amongst her people, who were deeply sunk in idolatry; from her earliest years she was conscious of a feeling of discontent and unhappiness, which increased with her years, and grew with her strength, and which she vainly endeavoured to remove by a diligent observance of all the bloody and cruel rites connected with the worship of her false gods. When she was about fourteen, a great excitement was caused among her people by the arrival of a white man (a missionary) among them. She, with many others, heard him, and the first words that fell on her ear were those which made an impression for ever on her heart: "There is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother;" and she returned to her home, still feeling the weight at her heart very heavy, but with the full belief that this Friend she had heard of would give the relief she desired, if only she could go to Him and get Him to be her Friend. In a few days the white man left the place, ere she learnt how to get at Him she sought.

For years she cherished the hope that he would come again, and she would vainly watch in the direction from which he had come; and thus old age found her, worn out in body, wasted with sickness, but with her life-long desire still unsatisfied and unquenched. At length some natives, passing through her village, told her people that a white man, a teacher of a new religion, had come to reside in a certain town some distance off. Eagerly the old woman listened, and her resolve was taken; aged and feeble though she was, she would go to him, and

endeavour, before she died, to hear again of this unknown Friend, and learn how she might get to Him. So she left her people, who little cared for one of her years and infirmities, and, after a toilsome journey, over a country unknown to her, arrived at the Mission House, well-nigh exhausted with fatigue, scanty subsistence, and exposure to a heavy storm, from which she dared not tarry for shelter, as she had seen from a distance the white man's dwelling, and felt she must not stop till she had reached it, lest her strength should fail her, and she should die with this long-desired object just in sight. When the missionary and his wife came to the door, she fell at their feet, and, with clasped hands and trembling voice, said, in her native tongue, "The white man's Friend! the white man's Friend!" and then fainted. They carried her within, and for long sought in vain to restore her to consciousness; at length, several times, she repeated something in tones too low to be understood. For some days her extreme weakness rendered any conversation or instruction impossible, though often she repeated her words at greeting,—"The white man's Friend!" The missionaries daily prayed beside her, not knowing the meaning she attached to her words, that she might find the true Friend of all sinners, whether black or white. One evening, when, as usual, Mr. L—— uttered aloud his evening prayer for her, she opened her eyes and gazed at him; he repeated the words slowly, and she strove to raise herself and speak. A third time he went through the same, when she clasped her hands together, and said, with all the strength she had, "That is it; tell me again; the white man's Friend!"

From that time, with eager earnestness, she sought to

learn more of this Friend, having discovered that He it was alone who could satisfy her soul; she never wearied of the things of God; but, when lovingly speaking of His mercy, would often say, "I shall know Him better soon. I should have come to Him long ago, but I did not know how to come,—I had no one to tell me." She remained many months in the station, her mind opening day by day to receive a fuller knowledge of Christ. On Easter Sunday she was baptized, and the following Sabbath received the Communion; a few evenings after which the missionary, on paying his visit to her, was struck by the change in her countenance. Summoning his wife, he told Mary that he thought her Friend was very soon coming to fetch her. "He is very welcome," she replied; "the white man's Friend!" "There is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother,—the black man's Friend, too, Mary. Your Friend now and for ever." "Yes," she said, in a sort of wandering voice, "a Brother and a Friend." She was silent a few minutes, then, opening her eyes, while perfect peace rested on her features, added, "*My* Friend, *my* Friend, for ever!" and she was gone!—gone to Him who had loved her all her life long, had led her to rejoice in His felt friendship, and now had taken her where she should have Himself as her portion for ever.[1]

The ignorance and slow comprehension of mind of Indian females, and the late period of life when God was revealed to her, would probably have hindered Mary's loving Him much for His own sake: her love would rather be dictated by gratitude for His friendship and salvation, as was that of the poor man whose heart was

[1] The Gospel Missionary.

opened by the precious words, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," and who immediately, in the ardour of grateful affection, expressed himself, "I have been thinking that there is nothing I should like so much as to spend the rest of my life in telling others of Jesus." A further call for love we find in the grace which not only forgives, but adopts and gives us the character of His family, and a place in that household hereafter; and they who are most apt scholars in His school must love to proclaim, not their attainments, but His patience and skill in teaching; most delight to sound forth His unsearchable goodness and wisdom. The same spirit of grateful love which ascribes the blessings of redemption to Him will also find constantly enlarging theme for the same praise as more of the Teacher's requirements, telling forth His own height of wisdom and spotless purity, are made known to it. And thus the more advanced believers become, the more will the confession of Sir Isaac Newton be heartily adopted by them,—that they are like children gathering shells on the shore of the ocean of truth. Thus it is that the highest Christians will ever be the lowliest in their estimate of themselves, as, when the corn is ripe, it bends down, because it is full in the ear. They who dwell most in the presence of the Lord will most truly estimate the absence of all ground for boasting out of Him, and will also most rejoice in telling forth His praises. With Paul, they will say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ Jesus our Lord." And where any progress in sanctification has been attained, any impulse to sin overcome, they will lay the glory at His feet, saying, with the Psalmist of old, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory;'

or, again, as a little boy once did, who was commended for putting away a fit of bad temper, "It was Jesus who did it for me; I asked Him, you know!" Man can no more sanctify himself than save himself; both are of God, and he who is taught of the Spirit will most simply confess his sense of unworthiness, and extol Him whom every fresh revelation manifests as perfect beyond all former belief. And, dwelling ofttimes with rapture on the temporary nature of earthly discipline, and the rapid approach of the time when he shall put off this mortal, and, arrayed in the white robe, enter his long-looked-for home, will not the Christian, during the days of his pilgrimage, tell those he meets whither he is journeying, and under whose guidance? Will he not confess that his garments truly are spotted, his conversation yet impure, but boast of his Lord's love for sinners, of His power to change their earthliness into heavenliness, and assure them that all He asks is for men to come just as they are, and He will purify and glorify them?

The last cause named for loving God is one in which angels as well as men can share—the glorious beauty of His own perfect being. To know Him must ensure our adoring love; and they who most gratefully appreciate His unnumbered mercies, and love Him for what He is to them as Saviour, Sanctifier, and Glorifier, will most eagerly seek to abide ever near Him, gazing, as far as the veiled eye of nature can, on His own transcendent greatness. *Here*, such knowledge is gained through His works, His word, and what He reveals by His Spirit to the heart; *above*, the King Himself is seen, eye to eye, and face to face; and through the countless ages of unending eternity His perfections will be found to be unsearchable—His praises will never be exhausted.

How greatly is the believer's enjoyment of earth increased by the remembrance, "My Father made it and all its varied wonders!" Everywhere he turns he finds fresh cause for praising Him, as His stupendous power, goodness, omniscience, omnipresence, and marvellous diversities of creation and operation, are increasingly manifest. Not only does he feel that nature is God's work, but, contrary to the common saying, even that which comes through the instrumentality of man is His likewise, He having put the inventive and executive ingenuity into man's head and hand. With David, he testifies, "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep; for He commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still;" with Canute, that He alone can say to ocean's swell, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed;" with Job, that the rain, thunder, stars, darkness and light, are in His control, who "hangeth the earth upon nothing;" and with Isaiah, that the host of heaven, which He bringeth out by number, calling them by their names,—the waters, which He measures in the hollow of His hand,—the mountains, which He weighs,—are His servants. From the sun, which lights and warms the whole earth, to the lonely plant flowering unheeded in the drear desert sand, all things testify to the greatness of the unsearchable I Am; and thus should the believer have a zest apart from, and additional to, that of worldlings in the study of nature; as he lists to the carollings of the airy songsters, warbling forth their tributes of joyful song, and marks the order of the seasons, the ever-

recurring intervals of light and darkness, the earth, now yielding out of her bosom the fruits which God's rain and sunshine have made to spring up, now reposing in wintry barrenness, preparing, by its Sabbath rest, for renewed spring and harvest times; as he receives from the mine ores which enable him to make and procure manifold comforts, and coal, which, in many points a beautiful emblem of himself, for long ages has been undergoing the preparatory processes, now fitting it as an article of almost indispensable utility; as ocean, too, yields up its stores of food and ornament;—surely his heart must glow with delighted satisfaction at all this, and infinitely more than pen can enumerate, or thought grasp, being the handiwork of his own God, his own Father, his Elder Brother! Surely he will be constantly seeking out the varied beauties of creation, and pointing them out to men, rather than make a boast of any insignificant progress of his own, in one or more peculiar branch of study. With David, his whole soul will go forth in adoration, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. . . . Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength. Bless ye the Lord, all ye His hosts; ye ministers of His that do His pleasure. Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul." All nature, to him, will point to nature's God, and his loving heart, thankful for the mercies of creation, preservation, and all God's beauteous works, will make His praises the unwearied theme, not only of thought, but of lip. And thus, too, will he see God in all the noble works of men; he will trace their powers of thought, the delicacy of their artistic and inventive ingenuity, back to their Creator, and will all the more love and admire the Teacher of

such pupils. And, above and beyond all this, he finds in the character of his God more of which he can boast, and in which he can delight, than is even set forth in the creative works of his mind. Here is ground of joy on which the believer stands alone, for they who are not covered by the righteousness of Christ cannot bear the blazé of His spotless purity; the revelation of His unswerving justice would but terrify them. Even the believer would be staggered at times, did he not rest unflinchingly on the confidence that God is love, and that in His hands his case is safely trusted; dark hours some of God's people know through admitting doubts, or questioning of those "secret things" which belong unto Him. He has some mysteries which we could not bear revealed now, and into these we must not importunately seek, though much is revealed to the calm, trustful, loving child who leans on His bosom, and puts off each burden of fear as it arises, by telling it to the Father, and then rests satisfied that His actions, when the perfect day shall declare all, will prove that unutterable love has permeated all His providences. Meanwhile love, from the analogy of God's scheme in creation, redemption, and sanctification, is confident that no one attribute of His character overbalances another; and thus makes its boast not only in His actions, but in Himself. His love, His holiness, His justice, His sympathy, and all His other traits, are the loved study, the admiring boast of His child, who, as he gazes, becomes transformed into the same image, and thus from a higher platform realises more of his former depth in the pit of corruption, from which Divine Power alone is raising him, which deepens his humility; and, in the nearing light of unclouded day, he traces defilement in what looked pure, as

seen in the foggy atmosphere lower down the hill, when he was at earlier stages of his journey. The preparation needed in man's heart, ere he can appreciate and rejoice in the sinless perfections of the Lord, is effected by the discipline of time; the love of such being an acquired taste. Hence, in building up the new love, the old delights must be completely overthrown; grace must war against and overcome the old nature, and through life the cross must be borne; the believer must be a marked man; not a speaker of his own things and his own experience, but a setter forth of Him who has graciously pardoned him, come to dwell with him, and promised him glory for ever. He must give others a good report of Him who is known to very many mainly, if not only, by the testimony His people bear of Him.

Charity vaunteth not itself, but it does vaunt of the beloved; and hence the Lord expects of those who say they love Him, who profess to be His disciples, that they will individually tell forth of His love, "holding forth the word of life," standing in the crowded ways, and pleading with those who have hitherto not given Him their allegiance. In this mission-work our natural pride brings us into danger; self, so unsuspectedly, so unseen, creeps in, consequently there is in it much need for spiritual discipline; and we must ever work on our knees—realising that the instrument is nothing, God being as able to work without as with it,—the power to convert is alone of Him.

When, indeed, His love constrains the believing child to speak of Him to sinners, self is forgotten in the absorbing realisation of His presence, the joyful privilege of telling the very words received from Him for them. Looking off unto Him, the believer is not affected by

the uncertainty of what their opinion will be, and, thus strengthened and emboldened, is free from any self-vaunting, resting on the assurance, "it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you," and "my word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." The looking into self, which makes believers sometimes shun mission-work altogether, sometimes go to and through it with trembling hearts, because they deem themselves too sinful, too weak, to do any good, betokens covert pride, an expectation of what the Lord asks not, because He knows they cannot give it; wishes not, because He has provided for them a power totally independent of anything in them He Himself has sent word to us that this power in no case rests in the earthen vessel; His breath alone can quicken dead souls, through, or irrespective of, secondary agency, at His will.

This holy, humble confidence in an arm not his own in a message not from himself, *in a converting influence acting through, not out of, him*, was the source of St. Paul's undoubting certainty that, if he visited Rome, he should there be a successful winner of souls. If for a moment we are startled by his, not hopefulness, but boasted assurance, we find directly manifested by him the reason of the same;—he who wrote, unhesitatingly and unconditionally, "I am sure that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ;" "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;" did so because of his glad trust in the Gospel message, of his firm conviction that "*it* is the power of God unto salvation." He forgot himself, as an individual,

or, rather, realised that his new life had no existence separate from Christ. He had unreservedly yielded himself to his Lord, and had merged all personal interests in the one supreme object dear to that Master's heart—the furtherance of the Kingdom; and that aim he knew must be realised, whether men would further it willingly or not.

Jesus says to each of His pardoned ones, "Now, go, tell how great things God has done for thee; henceforth thou art of the salt of the earth, one of the lights of the world;" but, reader, how can we, being intrinsically evil, give out good savour? how can we, being dark, yield light to others? Just only as we realise this great truth, "without Me ye can do nothing;" "ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." He was the light, for through His humanity shown His innate Deity; thus His whole life was light, and therefore His life was the light of men. He alone, at the close of that life on earth, could say without reserve, "I have *finished* the work which Thou gavest me to do." But to each of His people He gives of that life, and it, being grafted into them, must change the whole course of nature, sapping the old life-springs, and, itself developing, increase in brilliant lustre, till each believer is made perfect in union with His God, having dropped all individuality of life, though not of membership. And this being our position, as already sons of God, it does behove us solemnly to look into it, and understand wherein our new life consists, and how much it enhances our power to resist evil and attain to, and do, good. The subject is so deep and full, that we can here but touch together on some of the principal points in which the earthly tabernacle itself must henceforth show forth the beloved Lord, through His

now Himself taking up His abode in it, instead of the old Adam, self.

And oh, Holy Spirit, graciously breathe into both writer and reader, as we search together into this blessed, all-important theme, and enable us, as we rise to the heights to which Thy immeasurable love has called us, to sink in deep humility and self-forgetfulness, realising that we are accepted and loved only for the sake of the worthiness of Him who was dead, who now liveth, and that we live through His life only!

It is written, that the time is coming when "holiness unto the Lord" shall be marked even upon the bells of the horses. Now it is a mark of the same that the new life not only brands on each feature of this mortal, but gives forth from within it. It is not only as if the messenger from heaven put the seal of love, joy, peace, and holiness on the new-born child, but from out of his new godly nature there gushes forth that spirit of heavenly inhalation which speaks through tongue, eye, hand. In him now is life, in him light (but life and light not his own, not inherent to him, as with the Head, but borrowed). Most blessed though responsible condition! he and his interests bound up for ever and identical with his God's; his very tabernacle glorifying that God by its obedience and likeness to His character, adorning the Saviour's doctrine in all things.

Surely not without a purpose are the look and touch of Jesus recorded in the Gospels, as well as His words? but rather to show us what the Scriptures elsewhere teach us by precept, that the body is to be the servant of God as well as the heart. We have already dwelt on the duty of glorifying Him by our lips, by pleading with sinners, and telling forth the perfections of His

character and works. We read of Jesus *looking* "with anger, being grieved for the hardness" of sinners' hearts; of His *beholding* with love a young man; of His turning and *looking* on Peter. (What a look that must have been of touching love and rebuke, of mingled compassion and wounded affection!) "Let His servants mark this record of His looks; there is no small ministry in a single look, be it of love or anger. It may speak what words cannot express. It has, ere now, in storm and calm, mid the rush of battle, and in scenes of deep anguish, imparted confidence and peace beyond the power of language; for it speaks truly, hence its deep power. And, indeed, heaven may be in an eye, its sunshine and rain; and if it be there, though there be no speech nor language, its voice shall still be heard. Oh, for a look like that of the Master! Oh, for that light of life within, breaking forth through eyes beaming with love and holiness, 'seeing Him who is invisible!'"[1] This should be the language of the believer's eye. Ever should it gaze enraptured on His altogether loveliness, ever seek His guiding look. We, who have stood by dying Christians, can never forget the preoccupied gazing at apparent vacancy, with eyes lit up with such unearthly brilliancy, such unspeakable gladness, such unmistakeable adoration, that all who saw it needed not the explanation of the tongue,—"Thou art with me, Jesus; oh, it's all great joy, mounting up to glory! Oh, so happy! so Jesus has brought me to my desired—!" the last word, unuttered by the suddenly chilled tongue, explained by the happy spirit's entrance into glory. Such dying looks glorify the Saviour, by proving visibly that

[1] Jukes on the Gospels.

He has indeed removed the sting of death, and given His people victory over the grave. Reader! let our *life*-look be unto the same precious Lord Jesus, and *it*, too, shall speak His praise. In all His works let us see Him; in all companies let us look at Him; midst all the changing themes of our converse, let our eyes speak that we unchangingly watch Him. And such look will not only utter our own felt admiration, but will minister to others even like words, leading their thoughts to Him whom creatures cannot worthily extol—Jehovah, great I Am—and check sinners in their unholy walk and conversation.

Again, the touch of Jesus is recorded: the children He took in His arms; the blind eyes he touched; the sick He lifted up; the bread He brake: it was a calm, holy, gentle, loving touch; and surely it had a voice in it. Why should He not only have given the command, "Be clean," to the sick—Be open, to the blind? There was tender thought for their feelings. Who but knows the power of a touch to thrill with electric gladness—the privilege felt in the pressure of one loved or valued—the long, *long* time the sense of that touch will be realised? The touch of Jesus breathed humility: "I am among you as He that serveth." His earthly tenement was the alone one amongst the throngs around Him untainted by sin, and therefore peculiarly trying must His ministering have been; but He stooped even to wash the disciples' feet; and, though we are not plainly told so, yet the inference is probably true, that His touch taught also a lesson of holiness, and of glorifying God in life's most trivial duties; for we read that His grave-clothes were found folded up; that He worked as a carpenter; and that, at least, on one occasion, the fire and dinner were ready prepared against the return of His

brethren, weary with fishing. Such touch must be ours if we would glorify God by it; whatever we do we must do well, proving to the world that godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that *now is*, as well as "of that which is to come." And, like His, our touch must breathe love and thoughtful consideration, and should be longed for and loved of all. "Time was when virtue accompanied the hand of God's servants; nay, when even the shadow of an apostle could heal. It will not hurt us to remember, even if the glory is now departed from us, that such things have once been."[1] "Had we more of the mighty faith which can remove mountains, we might see things wholly out of the range of our present field of vision."[2]

One more point let us touch; if the feet of sinners "run to evil," let us see to it that our feet, like those of Jesus, are found ever treading the path of duty, the walks of lowly love. Let not vanities engage our time and thoughts; let us not be found in places where He is not a bidden and welcome guest, unless we go for the express purpose of telling of Him; but, keeping ever before us the chief aim of life, to glorify and grow like God, let us go only where we can get and do good.

Thus have we feebly traced how love will vaunt itself in God, by letting His life and light shine through the mortal casket; but, after all, how unworthy the sinner's boast must ever be, in this world of sight, of Him whom, "not having seen," he loves; of Him "which is, which was, and which is to come!" "The Lord is His name;" but how little can the finite mind grasp of His infinity, even through the glass of revelation! Truly,

[1] Jukes on the Gospels. [2] Ibid.

"Weak is the effort of our heart,
And cold our warmest thought"[1]

of Him, but the promise is, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord;" and in joyfully anticipating the anthems of heaven, surely there is an incentive to gain more knowledge of Him, and to praise Him more for what we do know of, and see in, Him, than has been our wont in times past. If the Church has neglected her intercessory duties, as the "royal priesthood," still more has she omitted her bounden service of loving adoration; she has forgotten to recommend her Lord and His cause. May there not be in this lack one great secret of the world's slowness to receive the truth? If so, how deeply humbling to both Church and individual members composing it! Henceforth may this passage be graven, as with a pen of iron, on our souls: Love vaunteth itself of its cherished object; and in learning to praise let us remember, we are preparing for the ministry of heaven, whose atmosphere is adoration; and, even now, when praising, we are joining in a service which angels and sainted ones gone before unite with us in offering. Praise is a blessed link between saints below and saints in glory; between the sundered members of the family, part on earth, militant—part in heaven, triumphant.

"Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious name; evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory: Glory be to Thee, O Lord most High."[2]

Soon shall we, beloved reader, stand before the throne, and see Him; soon shall we join in the new song, which

[1] Cowper. [2] Church Prayer-book.

"no man can learn, save the hundred and forty and four thousand, redeemed from the earth;" soon shall we, with purified, heightened love, magnify Him, to whom we owe all our blessedness, for His great goodness and great power. Heaven shall eternally re-echo with the raptured ascriptions bursting from each of its gathered mulititude—the song of the Redeemed: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever," swelling ever and anon into the universal chorus, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

We have already touched the remaining thought suggested by our subject, namely, that love in the heart of man will bear like fruit in his bearing towards God and man. We have seen that it takes a man out of himself, and inspires him with a care for others, an interest in their things more than in his own; that it deeply humbles him, because ere he loved there was revealed to him his own lost state; and he has been taught that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy;" and we have seen also that the deeper knowledge of his own than of any other heart displays to him more evil, both in kind and quantity, in himself than in any other being he knows. Self-vaunting thus being done away, love lavishes it, where it truthfully can, on others. Turning to the early days of Christianity, we find how jealously the Jews, even when converted, for a time, regarded the Gentiles. It was a sore wrench to them to share the privileges hitherto

exclusively their own; to believe that henceforth the Lord would number as His chosen, not Israel only, but aliens. A little later, we learn that this same spirit of self-boasting and churlish envy possessed the newly-gathered Gentiles; and, since those times, how sadly has the same hellish pride and hate, sometimes disguised, marred the spark of love in most believers! May we think on this, and have made plain to us by the Spirit, how that no superior natural preparedness of heart caused the Jew to be first chosen, and the blessing to be afterwards transferred to the Gentiles; or one "to be taken, the other left!" Grace alone chooses and preserves any: "of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things."

Enlightened love from Him, therefore, knowing these truths, cannot vaunt itself: even where, in talent or graces, the believer excels, he recognises the lent power, and at the same time feels how grievously he fails in faithfully availing himself of every opportunity given him for trading with the same. But admiration for His Lord's handiwork, and the training of that Master which is making him keenly sensible to all that is true, pure, and lovely, opens his heart, and eyes, and understanding to appreciate and rejoice in every point of beauty visible in fellow-mortals. As he looks on each, the thought will arise, "This is my Master's creation, and therefore he deserves my respect and love, therefore there must be in him an infinity of matchless workmanship and beauty;" and thus the believer learns often to love that which he would otherwise have deemed repulsive, finding in the very dissimilarity of tastes, appearances, and characters ever-deepening cause for

worshipping Him who is indeed incomprehensible in His unapproachable majesty, whose name is "Wonderful!"

Would there were more of this liberality of judgment; more readiness to admire all creatures in us; more of that love which binds us in such enthusiastic veneration, too often in such idolising affection, to one mortal, only lavished with less danger to self, with more God-like unselfishness on all the world; not lessening attachment to the few, but causing an expansion of heart, an intense yearning of soul, for all! Paul's might of love, for many whom he had never even seen, almost staggers us: "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh!" Let our aim, reader, be the attainment of this heavenly grace; "then shall we in honour prefer one another;" then will the study of every science and art become hallowed to us as that of nature, for we shall trace, in the thoughts, studies, and productions of great minds, the teaching of the Master, and, through their help, shall we mount the steps of the ladder leading to His throne of knowledge, and in every virtue and grace we shall boast with delight as the effect of His purifying, sanctifying touch. Thus love will feed itself on all things, and find cause of holy boasting alike in God Himself, in His works, and in His providences; and as we pass through the wilderness, amidst its sorrows, temptations, dangers, and wearinesses, praise shall be the constant burden of heart and lip; our mouth shall be "filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing." We "will bless the Lord at all times;" our "soul shall make her boast" in Him; we will "sing unto Him;" and "glory in His holy name," and "talk of all His wondrous works;"

we will give thanks unto Him for His goodness, and extol Him for His greatness; we will ascribe strength, honour, and righteousness unto Him, and call on His creation to rise and swell the chorus, "Praise ye the Lord."

CHAPTER V.

" Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Not the labours of my hands
Can fulfil Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone,
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Vile, I to the Fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment throne,—
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

TOPLADY.

CHARITY IS NOT PUFFED UP.

The Heart of Jesus—Danger of comparing Self with a Creature instead of with Christ—Paramount Love of Jesus chief Cure for Pride—Sense of Sin a Remedy—Mrs. Marsh—Deserved Reproofs from Man a Remedy—Ellen and Bessie—Sense of Infirmity a Remedy—Duty of judging Self, but not Others, a Remedy—Sense of the Value of Souls a Remedy—Prayer a Remedy, and the alone Means of applying the other Cures—Humility gives out the Things of Others—Humility receives patiently undeserved Reproof—Little Freddy—Humility seeks Companionship—Chambers of Imagery.

"I AM meek and lowly in heart." Such was the "mind" of the incarnate God, of Him who, though He was the Life, laid down His life, "when He had by Himself purged our sins;" though He was the Master, took upon Him the form of a servant; though He was rich, became poor;—He thus, of His own will, suffering, that we might live through His death; that we might be exalted through His service; that we might be enriched through His poverty. How dazzling His humility! how boundless His love! May the Holy Spirit glorify Him, by revealing to us somewhat of this spirit which dwelt in Him, and teaching us to admire this grace—of "great price" in the sight of God, but, alas! so unnatural to our hearts, so little valued of men!

Into another's heart we cannot see; far less can we probe into the spirit of this lowly One, who was raised by His sinlessness and indwelling Deity far beyond His "fellows" of earth. Best, perhaps, shall we be enabled to realise His feelings by contrasting inspired records of

Him with the detailed commands on humility given to us, and with the bearing of the natural heart to the same.

The possession of the love of God by any soul necessitates a measure of His light also, since a sense of sin, and of need for a Saviour, must be felt ere we accept His salvation. And this light humbles him in his thoughts of God and himself. No longer will he allow to himself, or to others, that in him dwelleth any good thing; all of good he will acknowledge borrowed.

But natural pride finds room for self-gratulation, even in the believer, when, instead of looking upwards unto Jesus, he measures and compares himself, as he too often does, with fellow-sinners. Here he feels there is natural equality; indigenous evil, exotic good, it is doubtless with all; but still, though he knows it is not of man to will and perform, but only of God, the feeling continually exists that, each having talents intrusted, and opportunities for trading given, one servant may lawfully test himself by another. And thus it is greatly that the Christian standard is now so much lower than in the early days of this dispensation. Then apostles looked on Jesus, and were compelled to acknowledge, "Never man spake as this man." They saw Him do what they could not, and felt the whole tenor of His life and conversation to be above them. Thus their gospels were full, not of their own miracles, blessed as they were; not of their own teachings, evangelical and powerful as they doubtless sounded forth; for the first were done by His authority, and the latter were but feeble copies — echoes — of His own sermons. Then, however much the believer felt himself to have attained, he knew that he still fell far short of the *man* he had *seen* and *companied with*. Now does he not oft take com-

fort in the sins and infirmities of fellow-Christians, and pride in all that, compared with them, excels in himself? forgetting that each servant "to his own master standeth or falleth," and that the earthliness of conversation, the unsubdued spirit, and the misused opportunities of others, form no excuse for his own failure in apprehending the truths and character set before him. May it not be, that even the very privileges of the present day thus tend to lower the attainments of many; the increased number of public preachings, and extensiveness of religious literature, inducing them to detract time from their lone personal communings with God and His Word? whilst known conformity to the world, and unsanctified tempers, in too many preachers and writers, tend to make religion more a matter of theoretical study and professional talk than of practical effect, working through the affections, and raising the whole tone of heart and life.

If here we discover a reason why our hearts are often puffed up, here, too, we find the remedy; the same which introduced us into the path of hope—a look (an abiding one, it need be, if hope is to have its fruition) off unto Jesus. Where love is, there is the heart, the thought. Where the beloved is, there is the altar at which self is offered, yielded a living sacrifice. The gospel takes it for granted that Christ is the treasure of every one of His followers. The low state of the Church, and our own individual sense of still-existing, still fruit-bearing, sin within, demand that each so-called Christian examine himself as to the state of his heart's affections, and see whether some idol is not eclipsing Him who has said, "My son, give me thine heart;" whether his love is not rather yielded to self, or some mortal; whether his de-

votion is not paid to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life." Only can those appear holy, and unblameable, and unreprovable in God's sight who have been reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, and have continued in the faith and supreme love of Him; and they, walking with Him, lose all pride; His spotless, radiant purity, and inherent wisdom and goodness, making all creature righteousness seem filthy by comparison, and excluding boasting, by revealing the borrowed nature of all that is lovely in man. Walking with Him, their thought is riveted, and gaze entranced. They can see none like Jesus—they can admire none like, none out of, Jesus,—

"Him first, Him last, Him midst, Him without end."[1]

And, in sight of Him, where is room for pride? Nay! it were unknown to believers, were theirs a true, all-absorbing love of the Saviour—a daily walk, like Enoch's. The death-knell of pride is sounded when the face of God is seen. Thus is it that the greatest minds are ever the lowliest in their estimation of self; for they who climb highest, and study deepest, discover how much yet remains unfolded to their view; and so with God's children, at each step they find a fresh depository of hidden treasure, of pregnant truths, which, gradually bursting on the enlarging, ripening soul, open into yet fuller rivers of truth, into yet more lofty heights. Out of self, into Christ—this is the secret of true humility, and love is the key to its attainment.

Dear, believing reader! let us not rest content with continually "laying again the foundation of repentance

[1] Milton.

from dead works, and of faith toward God," but, whilst strengthening these principles, let us also "go on unto perfection," and struggle to know more of real fellowship with our God. Having "received Christ Jesus the Lord," we must ever consider Him henceforth. But how can two walk together except they be agreed? "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and His blood cleanseth us from all sin." If we would have His humility, we must be learners at His feet, and test everything by His example and words.

This cure for pride includes all others, for to know and see Jesus is life eternal. Looking at Him, the darkness within becomes manifest; then the sinner sees the spirituality of the law, and freely confesses he has broken every command—too many, if not all, even in the letter. All that falls short of Jesus — all that is unlike Jesus in himself, he sees, in vivid contrast with the perfect Being at whom he gazes with thrilling, admiring love, and he resolves never to rest till the victory over self is complete, and the Master is reflected in His disciple. Paul's experience becomes his own: "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Not only the deeds, but the breath of sin grieves him; that even is defiled to his purified vision which once he thought to be holy, and what before he deemed as infirmities, foibles, perhaps almost boasted of, now he grieves over as tokens that Satan still has power over him. An instance of this is given of Mrs. Marsh by her son. At a moment when she was particularly engaged, two of her children ran into the room to ask

her some trifling question. She answered them in a hurried manner, but immediately afterwards retired into her dressing-room, and, after spending some minutes in prayer, returned and expressed her sorrow at having spoken so hastily to them. They felt quite distressed at such an acknowledgment from their mother, but, though then very young, it taught them a lesson of humility which would never be effaced from their minds. Outward tokens of the continued presence of defilement within are allowed by God mercifully to mar a believer's testimony to the end of life, to keep quickened his sense of sinfulness and insufficiency, and to afford new tests wherewith to try and strengthen his humility; for the mockery of those he seeks to win, and the correction of believers, are both trying to nature to bear meekly. When he has fallen, then is the time again to remember the Blood, and, confessing sin, patiently to accept man's rebuke. A wise man loves a faithful friend, however much his spirit smarts under the reproof. The tender conscience, given him of God, deeply wounded by the sin, will, for the future, be more on its guard against falling into the same snare, and the sinner's walk for a time will be with shame and contrition. Pride is one of the most insidious sins, and, knowing man's proneness to it, God often lets him fall low. They who use the correction aright, given often through human instrumentality, rise, *through* their shame, higher than they were before, and henceforth more than ever is their talk of other than self,—"we preach Christ crucified;" more than ever is their glorying alone of Him; more than ever do they point sinners off their own yet imperfect, to the Bible perfect, representation of Him.

Ellen —— was placed by her parents at a finishing

establishment for young ladies. An only and beloved child, they had lavished on her all that could make life sunny, and, in a few months, looked to have her home, when they would introduce her to their large circle of acquaintances, and she would doubtless form some brilliant alliance. Ellen had all to make her happy that earth could give, and as yet felt not unsatisfied; hope painting a future yet brighter than any present she had known. Amongst the girls at Mrs. ——'s school was another only child; her father was a widower, and her future prospects very different, though, out of a slender income, he was giving his daughter what he felt would be the best gift he could,—a superior education. Bessie was a child of many prayers, and with her whole heart loved Him who died for her. Between these two a warm friendship immediately sprang up. Both talented, high-spirited girls, their studies were pursued together with an ardour not second to their relish for recreations. As you may fancy, reader, Bessie soon sought to know who was chiefest in her friend's affections, and her sorrow on discovering that

> "The world, and worldly things beloved,
> All her anxious care engaged,"

but deepened her affection, and she confessed to Ellen the resolution of her heart to try by every means in her power to win her to Christ.

It happened one day that all the young ladies were very busied in preparing some theme to surprise a teacher; a friendly emulation stimulated their efforts. Bessie, extremely desirous of mastering her subject, like the others, took up the volume they were studying to her bedroom, and, whilst undressing, gave herself to its

perusal. The step in the passage warned them to get into bed, but still she read eagerly on till the teacher entered the room and put out the light; then she exclaimed, "Oh, Ellen, I never read to you to-night! Never mind, I can repeat instead; I must get up and pray first." Again, soon after dawn, the girls were at their work; Bessie hurrying more than usual over her prayers, omitting altogether her Bible-reading. The following Sabbath, as usual, they strolled, after evening service, into the garden, and Bessie began to tell Ellen of her Friend, and of all He ought to be to His children. But Ellen stopped her, asking if that text was always to be followed, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God," because, if so, she had not seemed to act on it the past week. "You are always condemning my love of the world—was not yours as bad?" Poor Bessie was silenced for that night; her friend's merry laugh cut her to the quick. How had she dishonoured her Lord, and put a difficulty in another's way. Not for that time only were her pleadings stopped; Satan and his slaves are not slow to make the most of any failure in a Christian's walk. Bessie was deeply humbled, and henceforth more watchful in her walk; the remembrance of her sin seemed to chasten all her after school-life; and when, at parting, Ellen laughingly told her she need not have made so much of such a little thing, and that her sorrow and consistency since had more than made up for the bad example she had set that once, she thanked her for having let her know what she had noticed of evil, and expressed her hope never to forget the past, but use it for a warning.

Surely a sense of infirmity as well as of sin would tend to keep a believer's heart humble. Unwillingly, unwittingly, we often fall away, like the silly sheep

following the wrong leader, and going the wrong way oftener than the right. Satan, taking advantage of our weakness, makes a temptation for us out of God's very mercies—out of our very growth in grace. Thus Moses, the meekest of men, fell in his strongest point, proving how wise is the injunction, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Too true it is, that "the most eminent graces are the most deadly poisons, if we rest in them and regard them with complacency."[1]

Again, whilst we are commanded to examine and judge ourselves, we are taught only to seek out the good in others, and love the traces in them of the Master's handiwork; if believers did this, another cure for pride would be attained. It is written, "Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Why? Because they are driven readily to acknowledge that they are despicable, unworthy, even compared to many of their fellow-creatures. They feel it is mercy alone can save them, totally irrespective of anything they have to bring. And thus the most reprobate often become the most shining saints. It may be urged, that there are some whom the heart will truthfully deem its inferiors; it would be dissimulating to pretend otherwise! Granted that a certain amount of self-esteem is lawful, for each is God's creature,—and some must know that they are more highly gifted of Him than others,—there is yet a means for self-humbling even unto them. When love and humility cannot but see defects in others, let them look more prayerfully within, and try themselves by the candle there, and the lamp of God's revealed will; the

[1] Fénélon.

result will be such as to silence all judgment, save on self. True, the same *inward* filthiness may also be in others, but who that needs mercy dare find fault?

Sadly, in all ages of the Church, has this prohibition of judgment been disobeyed. How has the conduct of the disciples been re-enacted by their followers, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and we forbad him, because he followeth not us." Denominational differences have separated those who, holding one Head, ought to have clung to each other as one body, and, in so doing, would have been better able to resist the enemy; the camp has been divided against itself, and bitter feelings and sayings have been rife amongst comrade-soldiers. True love allows differences of opinion in all but essentials, which are very few, though Christians are apt to class in such list many that belong not to it. How dream such that it will be in heaven?

Again, is it not true that many glory in their exclusive devotion to direct active ministration, over those who feel it their duty to yield more to the claims of society, and whom God may be bringing nearer Himself by a different education, even the raising their intellectual tastes more towards His perfect knowledge? Do not some boast in their spiritual perceptions, their new insights into Scripture, over those who devote themselves to a continual round of public services? Let our universal judgment of others be henceforth more in accordance with that used towards the few naturally loved and admired.

Another cure for pride is a true sense of the value of souls. Oh, could we but realise the awfulness of eternity in hell, we should lose all littleness of wishing to keep influence and affection in our own hands! Like Philip of

old, we should seek to bring all straight to Jesus; and if they would not be persuaded by us, thankfully we would introduce other agency, and be glad, not hurt, if they were successful labourers. A knowledge of personal powerlessness and sinfulness will make God's missionaries work in trembling. Who are they, that they should have such a post assigned them? God places them in it as much to humble as to honour them, as much for their own as for their charge's benefit. He would make them deeply conscious that they cannot constrain one heart, whilst to many they may be "the savour of death unto death."

A true appreciation of the preciousness of souls will make the believer rejoice over all who love and serve his Master, no matter at what hour of life's day they be hired. Joy for their safety, and for his Saviour's satisfaction in seeing of "the travail of His soul," will reign paramount over every other feeling.

May the knowledge of these, out of very many, cures for pride help us, dear reader, to attain to the love which is not puffed up—which is not only lovely in manifestation, but pure in heart! May the points be shown to us which peculiarly betray our spirits into this subtle but soul-destroying sin! and may such heavenly light be brought to bear on them as shall make us truly humble! And, in finding the needed remedy, let us remember it can only be successfully applied to the diseased heart through prayer: sadly have past resolves and efforts, made in our own strength, proved the vanity of any hope out of God. Pride rebels against *receiving everything*; but so long as anything is brought to God out of self, He refuses to accept the sacrifice. If love be true, there will be no *show* of long prayers, pharisaically, for the pleading and communion will be so real, so importunate,

so delightful, that all thought of the creature will be forgotten; but the believer will not hide from them his source of strength, but will love to confess, that all of good wrought in him is done "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord;" that when he and his fellows shall be built up into a perfect temple, each stone polished and without blemish, "the headstone" shall be brought forth "with shoutings of Grace, grace."

And not only will humility tell forth its source of strength, but it will give out of the same it receives, glorifying thus the Giver, and evidencing the little value it sets upon itself. This lesson it learns from the lowly Master, who, though He could speak as never man did, constantly quoted the written testimony of His Father—"It is written." Let such, dear reader, be our manner likewise; let us live on every word proceeding from His mouth; let us eat them; then shall we be able naturally, powerfully, to give them forth, as better than any experience of our own,—and having been the chosen utterances of Him who had made all hearts, and therefore knew them, and who desired by them to touch and convert the sinner's heart, they are more nicely fitted than any others to effect the purpose He and His people so long for.

In a lesser degree, the same spirit will cause a similar effect in our estimation of fellow-creatures, and the acknowledged borrowing of their thoughts, and perhaps words. It is natural that those who devote their mind and time to one branch of study should excel in it; and in these days, when personal gains of mental lore are so liberally given forth to the world, we should be foolish indeed not, like the cattle in rich pastures, to browse here a little and there a little,—and, if thus favoured ourselves, surely

it is wise to flavour our conversation and writings with what has enriched our own minds.

In both cases, humility calls for the study of objects of beauty out of self,—adopting, as it were, the call of David to inspect his cherished city: "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces,"—and, by a course of self-humbling, midst the teachings of God and man, prepares the believer for the fuller revelations of eternity.

We have dwelt on the chastened spirit with which love receives deserved reproof; the same will be evidenced when reproach is given wrongfully; "for this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

Lying and cruelty to animals were two faults punishable with a whipping in a very pious family, whose heads felt it their solemn duty firmly to wield their parental authority in checking the smallest evidences of evil passions in their children. One morning little Freddy, about six years old, had been left alone to play with his toys; the buzzing of a large blue-bottle fly tempted him to the window, and a game of catching flies ensued, in the course of which several were left dead on the sill. On these being discovered by the servant next morning, they were taken to the parents, who examined their little ones as to who was the culprit; all denying, the subject was dropped. Little Freddy's conscience troubled him through the day, and at night, stopping in the midst of his prayer at his mother's knee, he confessed all. The

punishment was administered for cruelty, but the lie was forgiven, as he had of his own accord acknowledged his sin.

A few days after, a number of dead caterpillars were found in a small paper box—evidently they had been starved through forgetfulness. Again the little party were summoned, and again all denied. His late offence, and the fact of the box being his, and his having expressed often peculiar interest in this genus, however, seemed to fix the fault on Freddy, who gently, but firmly, asserted his innocence. It was not for some time that his truthfulness on the present occasion was discovered; unmurmuringly, without a tear, he had submitted to the accustomed punishment. When the delinquent was proved accidentally to be his brother, his mother, astonished at Freddy's patience under the mistaken infliction, asked him why he had not rebelled. "Because, mamma, I knew I didn't deserve you to believe my word; and I should very likely have teased the caterpillars, like I did the poor flies, only for you and papa."

In receiving wrongful blame, the believer is but drinking a like cup of bitterness as His Master did; such treatment he must expect from the world that hated His Lord. "The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord." Flesh and blood will fire up under, and retort, scandal; heavenly grace alone will meekly receive it, and seek whether a handle may not have been given to the enemy.

One other effect of humble love in a believer's heart we must touch on. He will feel his aptitude to take one-sided views of persons and things, and will therefore embrace opportunities of learning the opinions of others, using his own discrimination in forming a final judgment.

Specially thus will it be in spiritual matters. Eagerly longing to know as much as possible of the Master whom yet for awhile he may not see, his delight will be to meet fellow-Christians, and converse with them over the word, and over the revelations that have been made to each. For "only *with* all saints can we comprehend what is the depth and length of that which is presented to us in Christ Jesus. And the household which is too small by itself to take in the whole Lamb can and must do so by the aid of others. For God will have every part of His Lamb to be apprehended by us, thus by our very weakness linking us to one another."[1] From out of our Sun of Righteousness diverge such innumerable rays of glory, that though each of His followers, as with a lens, tries to gather them all into his own soul, he can but grasp a few. They will be those most contrasting with, or naturally most approving themselves to, his individual character. Therefore it is needful, for a full, true appreciation of our God, that believers should not forsake the assembling of themselves together. Satan strives to keep each wrapt up in his own inner life, his own efforts to win sinners; but Scripture declares the Master's will to be that His whole family should be reared into one building, one holy temple; formed of separate stones, each cut and polished, but all joined together to form one body, perfect in all its proportions, symmetrical in its altitude, and vivified by one same vein of life running through and uniting each member. If such close union is to be above, surely, during their training time, it were well for the little flock to herd as much as possible together; not coming out from the world, and leaving its

[1] Andrew Jukes.

votaries without any heavenly savour amongst them, but ever and anon strengthening each other's hearts, not only with sympathy, but by giving and receiving the truth revealed to each. Ever remembering this, that rays radiate out in a straight line from light; and therefore they who receive a ray from Christ can only be borne back by the same strength—*straight back* into Him. Whilst helping each other, believers must look only to Christ, must aim only to be like Christ, otherwise they will have their barks stranded on the rock of idolatry. But, in thus steering towards Christ, analogy points out the blessed comfort, that they are nearing each other also; each step bringing them on the hour when the union shall be perfected of the Head with the members, and the members with each other—"a perfect man," formed of "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Seeing therefore, dear reader, that our future exaltation depends on our present humiliation, let us obey the mandate, "Seek meekness," and with our whole hearts struggle so to fall that we may rise, so to attain lowliness of spirit that to us may belong the beatitudes, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

Once, ages long ago, the God of Israel said to His prophet, "Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The Lord seeth us not." Which of us, reader, but must confess that a like chamber is within his own heart—that fearful doings have defiled it, such as he would not for all the world have revealed to his fellow-men? Which of us but must

confess to having endured the torture of remorse, if not, through circumstances, for crimes which brand the name of many with infamy, for sins which, in our early days, we shrank from with horror? Who but would be a child again, could he re-live life with present experience?

There are, it is true, some who boast of their morality, nay more, of their piety; who, like the Pharisee of old, feel, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." Theirs is a miserable delusion, which must be broken down when they appear before the Judge, if not sooner. Some such I have seen as they stood on the verge of the river of death, to whom has been revealed on *this* side of it, though "too late," their mistake; and oh, the agony of such no power of language can paint!

Alas! each heart has its chamber of imagery—"all have sinned." True, the development of evil may differ in each human being, but every heart is corrupt; of itself, *hopelessly* gone astray. May we therefore, dear fellow-sinner, believing this Gospel truth, humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God! Let us acknowledge, "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from His precepts and from His judgments." Let us entreat of Him, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Take away all iniquity, and receive me graciously."

Thus humbled let us ever walk; in such conscious

weakness, and childlike sorrow for the past, lies our safety, if, added to them, there be an unwavering dependence on the same Source for strength; for "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Blessed be God, the same Fountain that is opened "for sin and for uncleanness" gives forth also strengthening waters for the weary traveller, the spiritual combatant; through it, forgiveness for the past, and strength for the future, are secured; it affords a remedy for all natural infirmities, and clothes the sinner with a righteousness accounted his through faith; for all which the loving child will love with ever-increasing affection,—a love which will delight, as he journeys, to ascribe all it has and is to Him,—a true love, which "is not puffed up!"

CHAPTER VI.

" Saviour! Thy love alone can fill
And satisfy the human heart,
Can turn to good each seeming ill,
And peace impart.

Then deign to make Thyself to me,
While here a sojourner I roam,
A *living, bright reality*,
My Rest, my Home!

More present to Faith's inward sight
Than earthly objects to my eye;
My hourly well-spring of delight,
Which ne'er runs dry.

If of some cherished good bereft,
Too fondly prized, hard to resign,
Still let me feel enough is left,
If Thou art mine.

In sorrow, be Thy love my balm,
A panacea sure to heal;
In joy, to sanctify and calm,
That love reveal.

More intimately be Thou nigh
Than e'en the dearest earthly friend,
Bound by that strong, mysterious tie
Death cannot rend.

Let all around me clearly trace
A growing likeness, Lord, to Thee,—
A trophy of transforming grace,
Oh, let me be!"

CHARITY DOTH NOT BEHAVE ITSELF UNSEEMLY.

The Life of Jesus true to His Profession—Imperfection of Believer's Love—The Lord made known by Double Egyptian Exodus—Omnipotency of Love—Life a Platform—The Tongue—Love of Remindful Features—The Dumb Imbecile—Love's Leisure and Work—Love's Fear of causing Stumbling-blocks—The Shepherd—Present Rest—Heart Loneliness—Love's Hope.

In our God is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Perfect in character and action, He reigns the God of love. And as truly do we find in Him still as the man Christ Jesus, that charity doth not behave itself unseemly. Love brought Him down on a thirty-three years' mission to this world, and in no point do we ever find Him fail to this description of His character; no momentary passion ever threw Him off His guard; no irritation ever made Him speak angry words; no attraction had power to seduce Him from His self-chosen path of self-denial; no ingratitude sufficed to make Him withhold His pitying love; selfishness had no part in His loving being; He spoke and did no evil, because He thought none. One aim alone absorbed Him, and, true to it, His walk was ever consistent. All that lay between His cradle and ascension was to Him but the scene of one continuous battle between light and darkness. Sin ever stood out clearly defined in all its blackness to His pure eye, and it was intuitively hateful to Him; though He loved sinners, He loathed their sins, and could abide residence in this defiled world only *as* He passed through it,—a Purifier, a Life-giver,

a Saviour of those who must have otherwise been irretrievably lost. Thus we see, through the Gospel records, His life exhibit one continued self-abnegation. There was no stumbling in His walk, because His love was not a profession, only a mere fulfilment of duty; it was His very life. Never can we put a finger on Him as dishonouring His name. Gently He answered His seeking mother, dutifully He accompanied His parents to their rural home, though there His acquaintances would be only the rude ignorant villagers, and here He was surrounded by the *élite* of the learned and great of the country. He took to His father's trade, and companied with His brethren in their fishing excursions. The wedding feast, the sick-room, the funeral, the grave, each enlists His spontaneous sympathy; such was His spotless conversation, that He ever fearlessly turned to His work and words as a testimony of His divinity.

So, when God has breathed of His love into our souls, the greatest proof of His triumph over the power of sin is seen in the evidence given by transformation in the outer life, of the renewing of the soul; the love of Christ constraining in all things, at all times, and in all companies. Inconsistency so often mars our efforts. At times we feel dead to the world; spiritual communion alone or with devoted believers so rouses and cheers us, that we feel we could give up anything—"count all loss" for Christ; and we may in this strength glorify Him by lip and life for a time. And yet what a trifle vexes! How small a provocation raises a tempest of indignation! how intensely wrapt up do we become in "each clay!"[1] how much thought do we give to self! Oh, how sad it is to feel how the angry look, the impatient

[1] Vaughan.

word, the evident selfishness, often stains believers, and counterbalances their efforts at other times to bear faithful witness for their Master! Oh, the tyranny and misery of all unsubdued passions! Charity doth not behave itself unseemly; but believers are inconsistent, because as yet theirs is far from that perfect love to Christ which renounces self, and lives in another. They have yet self-interests of their own to look after, and these things are entanglements to them. To walk ever as Jesus did, the world's cares must be kept *without*, though they demand in God's sight diligent attention; the heart must be God's only, and our interests identified with His. If, indeed, we love God "with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength," then shall naturally our dearest desire be to get Him honour and love; exceeding precious to us will be the trust He reposes in us, "Ye are my witnesses."

"And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them." These words, as every reader of the Bible knows, were fulfilled when, after sending His plagues on king Pharaoh and his people, and finally destroying them in the Red Sea, God led forth His people towards the promised land.

But have they not a reference also to the spiritual Israel? Surely, yes. We mark the hand of an Almighty God in the wondrous works of creation, and in the order in which they are preserved, each fulfilling his appointed task. These works tell of God throughout the world, and have done so in all ages. But there is a work far mightier than these, which the same God has wrought often, and will work to the end, than which none tells more distinctly that He "is the Lord." It is even the

converting a sinner from his self-pleasing, sinful course to the path of self-sacrifice at the foot of a Saviour's cross. Nothing speaks more clearly the power of the great I AM than His drawing souls to live in Him, and for Him, by faith.

And so, dear fellow-pilgrim! if thou art one to whom the voice of redeeming love from Calvary has not spoken in vain, hide not all thy heaven-born thoughts within. Seek not, cowardly and idly, to live as before, concealing the sign of the cross in thy bosom, but remember thy Master is to be known to the Egyptians by the bringing out of His people from amongst them. Seek to live continually with Him in spirit, that your weakness may be made perfect in His strength; that, gazing by faith on His altogether loveliness, you may be changed into His likeness, transformed from a servant of sin into a creature of holiness. Oh, strive so earnestly to know and love the Lord, who has washed you in His own precious blood, that the glow of your devoted affection may warm some of the many frozen hearts around you!

God's love is an abiding thing, unchangeable in its character and effects. What need we to keep our souls in like even balance of love? Ever to realise our true position here—the wherefore life's discipline is appointed. Out of Christ, hopelessly, eternally lost; in Christ, brought nigh to God as our Father. What tie of gratitude or love can compare to this? What claim equal His, whose servants we doubly are by right of creation and redemption? What work can vie in interest and importance with that of dedicating ourselves wholly to get like Him, and draw others unto Him? "This is the will of God, that we keep His commandments," and these all are embodied in the one word, Love: learning to

love, and proving what we have learnt, is, therefore, God's appointed work for us on earth, and to perfect this work is life's daily discipline appointed. Our uneven walk proves how slowly we attain to God's character, how much that is devilish yet remains in us. The world's god is self, in varied forms—our God is Love; and if we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk not in His spirit, we either lie or deceive ourselves. The omnipotence of love is a fact often dwelt on, as regards the influence of warm Christian sympathy over debased and erring fellow-creatures. In a far higher degree, therefore, must the unfathomable love and wondrous sympathy of our God influence His redeemed ones. Under His eye they can manfully bear any cross; in His strength they can go through any temptation; in fighting they scarce feel weariness, for the reward of His smile, and "Well done!" is worth any cost.

And since the whole of life's pilgrimage is given but as a platform whereon, as we stand gazing upward to Him who beckons us to the places He has prepared, *to manifest the effects of His indwelling presence*, perfect love cannot behave itself unseemly at any time, for never is it off its guard.

"This world is but a school for thee,
Where trained and nurtured thou must be,
By means whose end thou canst not see,
For glorious life to come.
Then set thyself each day to learn
The appointed task,—thou wilt discern
Its need and use on thy return
To thy celestial home."

Heavenly love gives where it gets no return, goes out towards objects in whom it has no personal interest,

loving for their sakes; and, in order to do them good, passes over insults and unkindnesses they may offer. It is not only a passion, acting uncertainly, now undertaking some great work, now offending in little matters, but an abiding principle—a calm, even restraint of temper and inclination; not thankful only when God's sunshine gladdens, but rejoicing even in His tribulation,—such a love whose very pulse is praise.

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbour," consequently love sets a check on that little, but oft-offending, member the tongue. Who but knows the difficulty of restraining the cutting remark, or the exciting news which tender of slander? "Slow to speak," is the Apostle's advice; and those who are striving after their Master's spirit will seek to obey it; and though the restrained tongue does not prove the heart to be free from evil passions, it yet shows that there is a reality in the professed renewing, sanctifying power of the religion of Jesus. "Faith without works is dead," because, where faith is, there the love of Christ has taken hold, and that must constrain to fellowship in His spirit and character. How truly Old Humphrey says, "I'll tell you how it is; if we loved God more, we should love our neighbours more. If we reflected on His forbearance to us more, we should bear with one another more. Instead of remembering the text, 'A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger,' on the least provocation our language is as sharp as a two-edged sword. Instead of 'hoping all things' and 'enduring all things,' we give way to hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. We are told not to render railing for railing, but, contrariwise, blessing; but, so far from this, neither Jew, Turk, infidel, nor pagan, can show more quickness to

resent an insult, or to revenge an injury, than many of us do. Shame! shame upon us! As it is in the town, so it is in the country; we seem to carry a flint and steel with us, and strike fire on the least occasion. If we had more of God's grace in our hearts, we should manifest a better temper."

Oh, how sorely does one often long for the beams of glory yonder to be reflected in our eye! To have our face glowing as were Stephen's and Moses', when they looked on Jehovah's manifested presence!

> "Father of eternal grace,
> Glorify Thyself in me;
> Meekly beaming in my face,
> May the world Thine image see!"

And if we deeply love, and passionately adore, our loving God, and luxuriate in the unfolding of page after page of His unsearchable wisdom, and depth after depth of His unutterable love, and point after point of His altogether loveliness, shall we not rejoice in every example that brings Him nearer to us? When parted from earth's dear ones, by sea, or land, or death, how the eye scans every face, searching for likenesses to well-remembered features! and how the heart beats and swells if aught of resemblance appears! There is no jealousy towards such, but rather in loving pleasure does the eye linger on those remindful lineaments, intuitively almost loving their possessor for the sake of those far away! And so should it not be with us, who are as yet banished from the unveiled presence of Him we love? Specially since we have never yet seen Him, seems it not natural that we should eagerly gaze on all His works, and list to all

His words, that we may, as it were, be able to sketch in some faint, but, as far as it goes, truthful, degree, His image? And shall we not therefore rejoice in all that we see lovely, and good, and holy, and loveable, as tokens that their Maker will not disappoint us, but, as Solomon's glory exceeded the expectations of the Queen of Sheba, so, such as, and far more than, He seems by letter, and representatives when absent, He will be in person when we see Him face to face?

A little dumb boy, on his mother's death, was sent to a school or asylum for such sufferers. Being also a little imbecile, for some time his teacher and companions could find out no means of influencing him gently to do what they wished. At length they heard, through some friend, of the passionate love which had existed between the sufferer and his mother. From that time they found that the mere mention of her name was sufficient to quell all turbulent feeling, and induce him to fulfil his allotted task. The dearest reward they could give him was to say that he was like his mother, whom, indeed, he did strongly resemble in face. On his falling, years after, dangerously ill, he asked for a looking-glass, and on its being brought, bursting into tears, long and earnestly did he gaze on his own face in it. It was not easy to get it from him, nor to persuade him to say why he so gazed into it. At length he wrote on a slate, "They always told me I was like my mother, so I have been looking well, that I may know her at once in heaven."

Is there not here a lesson for us, who profess to love God? True love to his mother made that little one preserve, amongst strangers and away from her personal influence, a regard to her known will. The name of mother "brought him to his bearing." Oh, would that

our love bore a thus potent spell for good over us — that it thus nerved us to relinquish evil, and attain to holiness! Again, how dearly that child rejoiced in his confessed visible likeness to his mother! Would that of us knowledge could always be taken of our having been with Jesus! Once more, the boy had pleasure in looking himself on the likeness received from her he best loved. May we not, too, whilst humbly and truly depreciating ourselves, yet thank God for what He has wrought in us, and thence take fresh courage and go on more gladly? All of good in us comes from and by Him, and whilst it leaves no room for pride, surely it does leave room for holy joy!

Charity doth not behave itself unseemly. Its thoughts are continually occupied on its efforts for the beloved. As Divine love works constantly to satisfy the craving of human hearts, so heavenly-taught souls are ever giving their sympathies to, and lightening, so far as they can, the burdens, temporal and spiritual, hidden or apparent, of weary fellow-sinners. Their own cause being placed in such a masterly Hand, their own interests attended to by such an all-wise Love, they hang not dependent on human love and sympathy, unutterably precious as they still feel it to be, when given them. In Christ, they have been brought out of self, and to follow His example, in going about doing good, is the visible effect of their new life.

"The world's a room of sickness, where each heart
Knows its own anguish and unrest;
The truest wisdom there, and noblest art,
Is his, who skills of comfort best;
Whom, by the softest step and gentlest tone,
Enfeebled spirits own,

And love to raise the languid eye
When, like an angel's wing, they feel him fleeting by.

Feel only, for in silence gently gliding,
Fain would he shun both ear and sight,
'Twixt prayer and watchful love his heart dividing,
A nursing father day and night.

Warmed underneath the Comforter's safe wing,
They spread the endearing warmth around:
Mourners, speed here your broken hearts to bring;
Here healing dews and balms abound;
Here are soft hands that cannot bless in vain,
By trial taught your pain;
Here loving hearts, that daily know
The heavenly consolations they on you bestow.

The world to them is closed, and now they shine
With rays of love Divine,
Through darkest nooks of this dull earth
Pouring, in showery times, their glow of "quiet mirth."

New hearts before their Saviour's feet to lay,
This is their first, their dearest joy;
Their next, from heart to heart to clear the way
For mutual love without alloy;
Never so blest, as when in Jesu's roll
They write some hero-soul;
More pleased upon his brightening road
To wait, than if their own with all His radiance glowed."[1]

Charity doth not behave itself unseemly, because, in so doing, it would not only grieve the Lord, but also cast a stumbling-block in the way of others. How awful is the prolific nature of sin! "It is never unfruitful. No sooner is one sin truly born, or brought forth in its maturity, than it becomes the parent of a thousand, or a

[1] Keble.

million of other transgressions. There is no point which should make us *dread* sin more than its hydra-like multiplication. It branches forth in every direction; it is impossible to check its rapidity of reproduction. Oh, if it were *possible* that we could look forward, and see the myriads of offences against God, in those around us, which spring from one idle word, or unrighteous deed of ours, we should estimate sin more truly! How fearful is the effect of one cross word! The fire of discord is lighted, and who can tell what the end will be? Bitter feelings, cruel taunts, mutual recriminations, false accusations, guilt of soul, loss of communion with a God of love—all following as the fruit of the first hasty expression of unkindness! 'Where no fuel is, the fire goeth out;' blessed are those who, by a 'soft answer,' know how to 'turn away wrath!' It is not, however, alone in the effect of *angry* words, that we mark the prolific nature of sin. A *jesting* word has often the same effect. Solomon alludes to this, 'As a madman, who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am I not in sport?' It may appear a light thing to repeat a piece of scandal, or to tell a good story, but remember, you who would shudder at the thought of hurting another physically, 'there is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword.' And are not *deeds* of wickedness as reproductive of sin in others as *words?* The contagion of the leprosy was the symbolic representation by which the Israelites were taught that fearful truth, the prolific nature of sin."[1]

Charity doth not behave itself unseemly. Dear reader, if indeed Christ is in you the hope of glory, how

[1] The Protoplast.

blessed beyond thought is your portion! how satisfying the love and sympathy He gives you! What more can you desire? "You rest on infinite love,—the love of the Father, the love of the Son, the love of the Spirit."[1] Now, therefore, it behoves you to glorify your Lord, by testifying to the fulness of love and grace with which He more than meets your necessities; and by showing, out of a humble, earnest, self-sacrificing conversation, that you have been learning of your Master to seek the lost.

If you are one of God's people, you will not stay in Egypt; you will long, as His people of old did, to enter into the land of promise. You will be content to take up your staff and scrip, and go forth under the guidance of the Heavenly Commander, not knowing the wilderness through which you have to pass, but simply *following* your Shepherd; in loving, trustful obedience, obeying His every command; in child-like faith, fearing no evil; in joyful hope, looking for the home prepared for you in the sinless, sorrowless country of your King.

And as you go, *sing!* Sing praises joyfully unto Him who has chosen you, out of a world lying in wickedness, to be one of His own peculiar people. Be not cast down by every difficulty, nor dependent for happiness on fellow-travellers. Jesus Himself, your Captain, is in the midst of His people; every eye should be fixed on Him, every heart swelling with joyful thankfulness for the great deliverance He has wrought. If you are sick on the way, or weary, fear not lest you should be forgotten amongst the many, and left behind to perish. Jesus has paid too high a price for each soul to leave you to die. No, nor even if, through your own sinful turning aside after some forbidden

[1] Rev. E. H. Bickersteth.

thing, or your tarrying with some loved fellow-pilgrim, you lose sight of your Leader, and become entangled in the thickets of the wilderness, and lose your way, will He leave you at once. He counts His sheep, and He will come after you, and plead with you to return.

And, yet more than this, not only does He lead His people out, not only is it true that "there remaineth a rest" for them, but *even now*, though travellers, His people "enter into rest;" for *He* leads them, *He* provides their daily food, *He* is by the side of each pilgrim when the enemy attacks Him, *He* will come at all times, at their faintest breathing of His name; nay, more than this, He dwells in each pilgrim, reading the thoughts of his heart, and tenderly sympathising with him in his varied frames and changing circumstances.

He knows the feelings of a traveller; and whilst He ever points the weary, sad spirit, to His own cross, telling of all He bore for sinners, and upwards to the throne, telling of what He has purchased, and prepared for those who hide in Him, and turn not back from following Him, He yet feels with it in the trials of the wilderness-journey.

Often His love appoints that kindred spirits should go hand in hand. This is His brightest, purest, earthly blessing; but He dare not always give it, for some hearts would love the gift too dearly, and make it the shrine of their idolatrous affection. And so He has to leave them, lonely amongst the many; yet not alone, for He marks each lonely one, and twines the tendrils, unbound from the creature, around Himself.

Thus the Lord's portion is His people, and He is the portion of their inheritance. They were once dead in sins, alienated from Him, strangers to the covenant of

promise, living without Him, opposed to Him. He chose them, He constrained them by His love, He signed them with His cross, He went before them; but still they bear with them the sinful nature of the old man. Continually this is manifested by the rebellious spirit they exhibit; and it is only by His loving gentleness, and faithful discipline, that their earthly spirits are refined, and made meet for the prepared home.

"And so He bringeth them unto the haven where they would be." *So* — now through sunshine, now through shade; and then, having been brought out of Egypt, and led safely to Canaan's shore, they shall enter into eternal rest, and be satisfied in the overwhelming joy of His presence. They shall be unclothed from the filthy garments of the flesh, and shall put on robes washed white in their Master's blood. Then shall they know the exceeding preciousness and glory of their adoption privileges; they shall be with Jesus, and "like Him," for ever.

There shall be "no night" in their home, for they shall rest without a rest, and shall need no more chastening. Oh, what will it be to gaze on Him whom, not having seen, they had best loved on earth! What will it be to have every pulse bounding with rapture, and to know, as eternity rolls on, that joy will only deepen, as more of the glory and love, and surpassing beauty and wisdom, of their King is revealed to them!

"For ever to behold Him shine,
For evermore to call Him mine,
And see Him still before me;
For ever on His face to gaze,
And meet His full assembled rays,
While all the Father He displays
To all the saints in glory.

Not all things else are half so dear,
As His delightful presence here,—
What must it be in heaven?"[1]

Dear fellow-pilgrim! if this intensely bright hope is yours, be not now bowed down with the weight of disappointed hopes and heart loneliness amidst the multitude thronging thee. Look upwards always, and even in the darkest night the shore beyond will be so dazzlingly bright and beautiful, that the hope of soon anchoring there shall cheer and strengthen your drooping heart. Now it is for you to walk in faith, not expecting rest till the day's work is over. Now it is for you to bear aloft your standard of the cross, and fervently, both by word and life, make known the great deliverance which HE has wrought for you. Seek to win, from deeper than Egyptian darkness, some who shall be numbered with the true Israel,—some who shall hereafter shine in the crown of Him who gave His own precious blood for you!

This is your blessed work now; your rest shall be soon, when you shall see His face, and, in His own many-mansioned home, shall join in that triumphant song, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

[1] Swaine.

CHAPTER VII.

" We of that altar would partake,
But cannot quit the cost. No throne
Is ours to leave for Thy dear sake.
We cannot do as Thou hast done;
We cannot part with heaven for Thee;
Yet guide us in Thy track of love."

KEBLE.

CHARITY SEEKETH NOT HER OWN.

Jehovah's Love in creating Man—Testimony of Old Testament—The Father's Gift—The Son's Life and Death—Object of the Triune God—The Believer's Want must be His Glory—More Knowledge of God needed—Self transferred into Him the consequence of Love—God's Pleasure fulfilled in the Believer—By the Believer—The Affirmative Force of Expression "Seeketh."

"God is love." Love is the merging of self in the object beloved—the identifying the interests of others as its own—self-annihilation. How wondrously do we find this unselfishness in our God! Himself enjoying, from all eternity, the fulness of heaven's riches and joys, He knew no want, and yet His delight was to create a world and fill it with blessing, that His own happiness might be multiplied in innumerable objects of His creation; and though that world, through the ingratitude of him whom the Creator had placed in trust over it, soon incurred God's just punishment, still love alone influenced the heart of the dishonoured Sovereign—"in wrath He remembered mercy;" uttered with the curse in loving pity was an unutterable blessing, such as should make the hell-deserving sinner, if he would turn from evil and believe the promise, richer far than he had been before he transgressed. From year to year God suffered with the rebellious work of His hands, and for the sake of the "little flock" who would accept pardon He patiently waited till the fulness of time was come, and all through those hundreds of years the Father and Son knew all

the agony that had been undertaken by them. And who that has tasted sorrow, but has felt the suspense of days approaching the parting hour to be as, nay more, painful than even the very farewell? Who but knows how much of life's bitterness consists in a dread of coming evil, as Job felt? How this shadows the brightest sunshine! Divine love endured all this. Oh! are we not apt to forget this, and reckon the time on earth as the only time of His sorrow? Truly, herein was love,—a seeking not His own; and all through that time He sought, both by speaking from heaven, and by sending His messengers, to gather out from, and preserve in, the world, a people who should know the joy of a oneness with Him, and likeness to Him, and place by Him for ever! Our Bible presents us with the record of His unwearied efforts to win sinners. By rewards and punishments, by encouragements and threatenings, He sought to reveal Himself, and bind them to His service. Love bore with them. He needed not the addition of man's song to swell the heavenly anthems, but His very nature (love) looked away from self, and made His soul yearn to reflect its own perfect joy on every object that would have faith to look on Him.

And when the waiting time was fulfilled, the Father was pleased to yield His Son to humiliation and suffering, because He loved poor ruined sinners. We cannot search His love who gave up One so unspeakably dear to Him for such a mission! Who can realise the strain on that Father's heart, when from the deep shades of Gethsemane, in the midnight hour, rang that fearful cry of anguish, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me?" As in Luke, xv. 21, the cry, "*My Father*," the natural trust in that precious tie, awakens

some of the tenderest feelings in the human heart, a parent could hardly be insensible to a child's pleading so prefaced!

Dear reader! it was love such as no human heart can fathom that made God the Father leave the crushing burden of agony, though He sent a ministering angel to strengthen the "beloved Son." What story of fiction can ring a thrill of suspense and deep pain such as this cry, "O *my Father?*" The powerlessness of the Father to grant the prayer proves the awful—the otherwise irretrievable—depths to which lost man had fallen, and the boundless extent of His love to sinners, that, *at any cost*, He would save them, so long as His innate, spotless justice should be satisfied. For love's sake the Father left the Son to suffer and to die.

And further: who can penetrate the love of God the Son, who, when the hour of humiliation was come, of His own free-will left His throne and endured thirty-three years of more than human trial? From childhood to manhood His was a singularly lonely lot, for who could give sympathy meet for one so far removed above man in knowledge and purity? Even over the hearts of those who loved Him there was a blindness which would have hindered rather than strengthened Him. (Mark, viii. 33.) Ofttimes He had not where to lay His head; He knew hunger and thirst, poverty, weariness, and sickness; ill-treatment by the many whom He came to save, always undeserving as He was of aught but respect and grateful love; desertion, denial, and treachery by friends; yea, for our sakes, that beautiful fifty-third chapter of Isaiah was true of Him in every point. There was no complaint of poverty, nor setting apart of Himself as nature's Lord; the testimony of one who had been

His constant companion was, that He "went about doing good." Self was lost sight of; knowing the abundant reward awaiting Him hereafter, He reckoned the comforts of this life of little moment; everything had to succumb to the glorious aim of making known His Father's will; He constantly pointed out to the people how the Scriptures were fulfilling, and in all things attributed praise to the Father, whom He honoured by prayer. The doing that Father's will was the sole object of His lifetime on earth. Love to God and man, which is the whole law of the Bible, summed up His perfect character. From His lips we hear the unearthly command, "Love ye your enemies;" and, turning to see how far His own bearing was consistent with it, we find a touching sympathy in the approaching sorrows of the country people who so scornfully rejected and ill-treated Him; Jesus wept for *them* tears which His own intense griefs had no power to wring from Him. He healed one of those who came to seize Him, and in His dying agonies pleaded for His murderers, tenderly *excusing* them to His Father. And is it not sweet to mark, too, in Jesus the strength and impulsiveness of His friendships? His human nature clung to the ties of blood and of natural love and attraction. His obedience in childhood to, and tender care on the cross for, His mother, His peculiar attachment to His disciple John and His favourite friends at Bethany, His spontaneous kindling of heart towards a young man—all these mark the man; and yet in such a perfect way did He bear Himself towards each, that One man only did His loves proclaim Him to be—the man Christ Jesus. As He walked through life, His efforts were concentrated on lightening the burdens, spiritual and temporal, of all around Him; His joy was

to cast as many rays of sunshine on as many paths as He could. He felt and provided for the hungry multitude and the few fishermen; His gentle presence brought peace and joy to the sick and suffering; His sympathetic and enlightened conversation made the sorrowful journey a time of heart-burning with glad and holy thoughts; He companied with sinners that they might be won from the error of their ways. *In* the world, but *not of* the world, He passed through it a marked man. And when the fore-ordained time for His death came, Jesus, with all His sufferings full in view, of His own will went up to Jerusalem. May we be baptized with His baptism, dear reader! that we may, with deeply-solemnised love, enter with Him these last hours of unparalleled woe; and as He cries, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger," with deepening wonder and fervour of affection, our souls, stirred to their very depths, shall feel, "Yes, precious Saviour, *it is something to me, —it is everything* to me! Thine agony hath saved me; I am Thine. Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee. To me Thou art more than precious; henceforth Thou art my ALL!"

It was evening when "the Man of Sorrows" sat down with His chosen twelve to eat His last meal on earth; probably they did not realise that the parting with their beloved Leader was so near, "but Jesus knew all;" and we may believe that the choking sensation of grief oppressed Him, which we so well know who have, like Him, sat at last meals before partings; the trying to swallow, partly to sustain physical strength, partly to conceal grief, the

difficulty of utterance, the full eye, the blanched or burning cheek! And His parting hour was embittered by the fore-knowledge of the difficulties which awaited His followers, the martyrdom which many of them would be called on to endure for His sake. "Supper being ended," that meek and gentle Master rose, and, having girded Himself, washed the feet of each of His disciples—an act of ministration emblematic of His whole pilgrimage below. Then He led the eleven forth unto the Mount of Olives, and, leaving eight at the entrance of the Garden of Gethsemane, went with the others deep into its shadowy recesses. Again He leaves these, for no human eye may witness the agonies of that still midnight hour. The full, calm Passover moon, shining in all its Eastern clearness and loveliness, would make the shadows in that beautiful garden more deep,—all was still, save the three cries of agonised yet resigned pleading, which must have caused a stillness even round the Throne. The slumbering disciples failed to watch with Him; alone He sought and obtained strength to go through pangs yet more awful. We follow Him on through that dread night, as a chosen one betrays Him, and the rough band lead Him on to Pilate; there, He who shall be Judge of all, for our sakes, stood before man's judgment-seat, now gently answering, now by silence asserting His Godly dignity; from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod to Pilate, they drag that weary one, and after the judge's sentence, "I find no fault in this man," they deck Him in mock emblems of royalty, wounding with a crown of thorns that "dear head," on which shall be placed by the Father "many crowns" of eternal and glorious dominion! "And after that they had mocked Him, they led Him away to crucify Him." One only helped to bear His cross, and he was

compelled to do so. Then, stretching His frame on a cross, nails are knocked into His tender hands and feet, and now He has yet three hours of mortal agony before Him. The fearful pain of crucifixion can scarcely be realised; we hardly dare look on that beloved, bleeding figure, the whole weight of the body pendent on those torn limbs, causing a painful thirst, to appease which they gave Him vinegar to drink. Amidst the excruciating pain He looks on two loved ones below, and commended them to each other's care; how dear to them would be this commission-work for Him, given at such an hour! Again, He listens to a penitent's cry, and to the late scoffer gives a promise of immediate inheritance. Gently sounds that same peace-giving voice, as He pleads for those who are tormenting Him, "Father, forgive them." Thus to the very last He thought for others, and left a faultless copy for the people who were to be known in the world as His by their love. We cannot enter into the fulness of His feelings during those three hours of suffering, when the sun refused to look on the perpetration of a crime so awful. Then burst forth that exceeding bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"—a mystery we cannot fathom, proving, perhaps, more than anything else could do, the truth of those words—almost too good, too precious, for faith to grasp, "*As* the Father hath loved me, *so* have I loved you." And now His mission-work was complete; He had fulfilled all that Father's will; in no point of duty had He ever failed; no taint of sin had marred either His inward or outward life; no opportunity had He ever lost; He had drunk the cup of affliction to the very dregs; therefore, in stooping even to death, His soul was strengthened by this blessed memory and the words, "It is

finished," tell us, who gaze in wonder on that passive endurance of agonies undeserved and almost insupportable, the source of His calm patience, and willingness to suffer. His Father's will was dearer to Him than aught beside, and to man He had given a brother's love; nay more, to those who believed on Him, He had promised complete union with Himself, identification of interest, and a share in His ineffably bright inheritance. "It is finished;" redemption is bought for all, the object of His life-long aim and efforts is completed; and He, who has secured life and immortality for the innumerable multitude who shall for ever surround His throne, is Himself *dead!* He has submitted even to the lowest depth of humility; He has yielded to "the tyrant;" "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." And we know that, in leaving this scene of His trying pilgrimage, His thought still was for His people: "I go to prepare a place for you;" even now, exalted in glory, and given by the Father "a name which is above every name," "He ever *liveth to make intercession* for them." Oh, brother! as we follow Emanuel from the cradle to the grave, one word seems inscribed on His every action, on His every privation and suffering—"Love;" and this love, according to the measure of His own inspired description, "Charity seeketh not her own."

And now that the Triune Godhead is again waiting the fulfilment of time to the end, in their several persons they are still manifesting their love in working for sinners. Jesus is interceding for them, and making ready the mansions, and the Father accepts His prayers, and listens and makes answer to His blood-bought people; and together they dwell in each earth-bound pilgrim

who accepts salvation; and God the Spirit draws the hearts, adapting the truth to each one's need, revealing Christ, teaching to pray, and sanctifying and building up each saint in "the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Thus we see, dear reader, that our God has proved Himself to be love—and as He is, so must His servants be. Love is the spirit that pervades His home above, and nought but love can enter there; we, who are seeking to attain to that sinless land, must be in measure attuned to its character; all our time on earth is given us for this purpose. Selfishness is ejected by the Spirit of God; our object in life must be to follow Him whose one purpose was to set forth God's glory. Our longing and prayer must be for "His glory rather than our want, or better, our want His glory."[1] To be well acquainted with Christ is the great thing; for His perfection must draw out our admiration; His suitability our allegiance; His love our devotion; His sympathy our confidence. True knowledge of Him would ensure enlistment in His service; for He is so transcendently worthy, so loving, so mighty, so "altogether lovely," that the sternest, most rebellious heart, can be constrained to sit gladly and humbly at His feet, so soon as the light of His countenance shines through the sin-darkened soul. Obedience is the embodiment of love, and the reason why we are still so unlike our Master, and so often grieve Him, is because we know Him so little for ourselves; we so seldom look on Him; our gaze is unsteady; the bubbles of earth distract it often; and because we look at Him

[1] Hammond.

but a little, and know Him so little, therefore we do not love Him more. We must pray to *know Him*, and we must agonize to *know Him;* He waits to reveal Himself; "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him;" "O *taste* and *see* that the Lord is good." Looking on Jesus is the alone safe posture; in it alone we can grow in grace and in love. Looking on Jesus, our thoughts will be absorbed by His incomparable beauty and perfection, and, as the Spirit shows us His suitability for our need, we shall transfer to Him the devotion with which we have hitherto served self or mammon. To love another is to transfer one's self into that being; and so when we know something of Christ, we shall live in Him; His spirit will be ours; the same mind will be in us as was in Him, and as with Him, so increasingly with us, the will of the Father will be our meat and drink. And this is His will, that we should step by step follow His guiding eye; that henceforth there should be no I wills in our hearts, no seeking to please self, or rather no self to please; but a calm, constant, willing self-dedication to Him, that His pleasure may be fulfilled in us and by us. Our life must be bound up in His love and approbation; to gaze on Him, and commune with Him, and *feel* His heart beat with joy, and *see* His smile, and *hear* His voice, and know that all power is given unto Him—that His kingdom is coming; these must be our joys realised in constant experience, even as they are the bought privileges of a Saviour's love.

And, *first*, that God's pleasure may be fulfilled *in* us, we must seek to learn from our Bibles God's view of sin and holiness. We, who have never known aught but this sin-tainted atmosphere, are so habituated to earthliness of thought, and to seeing and hearing evil around

us, and our own hearts are so inclined to sin, that we can never enter fully here into the continued suffering of spirit He endured whilst on earth, in whose sight the very heavens are impure, and "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." "The fellowship of His sufferings," though, will be the desire implanted in every one that is born again; love endeavours as much to avoid giving pain as to give pleasure, and, therefore, whilst we are called to work for God amongst others, we are also called on by love to avoid grieving Him by serving His enemy, and yielding to that sin which crucified Him. One corrupt lust—one unsubdued passion—one indulged sin—may for ever separate a soul from the Saviour; for, whilst He died for sinners, and His blood "cleanseth from all sin," God's curse must yet rest on all who *continue* in sin. "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them;" "therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." In those whom He forgives He implants a new nature, and they "cannot sin," that is, they can no longer live willingly yielding unto sin; henceforth a warfare will exist between the seed sown in them of God, and the corrupt nature which must cleave to the mortal frame on this side eternity. If we are following Jesus, His love will constrain us, and regulate all our will and work; it will nerve us to wrench from our bosoms the "dearest idol"[1] we have known; to resist every unholy thought, and put away from us every un-Christlike action. The renewed soul cannot enjoy that which is repugnant to its very nature, and, fearful as the struggle may often be, we shall be strengthened to

[1] Cowper.

follow its dictates by the remembrance, that the redemption of our souls cost more, to Him whom we love, than we can ever repay, and therefore we will gladly endure, to prove that we do love Him, and do appreciate all He has done for us.

Again, God's will is that His pleasure may be fulfilled *by* us. Believers are apt to please self, rather than their Master, in their work; often putting aside the work He places nearest them for the kind they prefer, or doing His work in an unsatisfied spirit, as not what they think would best prove their self-dedication to His glory; or, again, they seek to *do* His work when He asks them to *bear* it. We need, reader, not only to pray with Paul, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" but, in a waiting, teachable, searching spirit, to examine our path, and, with our lamp and chart for our guide, and, if obtainable, the disinterested opinion of a fellow-believer, to live up to our prayer, by following, not that path which best suits our inclination and earthly welfare, but in which we can best further our Master's interests, in which we can most lead others to feel that there is a something constraining, worthy of possession, in the love of Christ. It is not in doing some peculiar work that He is most glorified. Times there are when God's providence leads out one and another of His people to do more marked labour for Him, but usually He asks them to abide in their calling; and in their homes in their neighbourhood, by gentle, consistent example, and loving, heartfelt pleadings, to "show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light." One difficulty that presents itself to many, at times, is that it might be more profitable, to themselves and dying wanderers around, if time were devoted to direct missionary

work, in some portion or other of the vineyard; yet, is it not His will that the powers of mind He has given should be cultivated—the social duties of life attended to? May not this work be done for Him? In Him dwelleth all the fulness of wisdom and knowledge; and therefore, in acquiring instruction, in improving taste, in developing the powers of others, are we not striving to attune ourselves and them to a higher degree towards His perfection? Secular work must be done, and if all God's people withdrew from it, where would be the salt wherewith to salt it? As one of His people[1] has cheeringly pointed out, "I know no cordial restorative like those five words, 'Is not this the carpenter?' (Mark, vi. 3,) and patient thought on what they involve. To think of *Him* at the carpenter's bench glorifies and beautifies every household and school-room duty." The danger of active life midst secular work is lest the Christian's standard be lowered by contact with the selfish, worldly policy so rampant abroad. But, if truly belonging to Christ, He comes with us into the world, supplying all our need, and making all grace abound towards us; He sees the hidden springs which actuate faithfulness in "little things," the patience and self-control, the restraint on temper, the zealous labour, and will in no wise forget them. In the daily work of this kind, too, He can make us instruments of deeper spiritual blessing than some may be who are engaged in direct mission-work. The Spirit can sanctify the most common drudgery, and in such work He will not withhold rich, soul-thrilling communion with Himself. There may be a self-seeking in His work if we are too absorbed in it, and, therefore,

[1] Rev. E. H. Bickersteth.

God's love at times allures into the wilderness, at the very time when work seems hopeful, blossoming most dear to us. But if we really have the love of Christ dwelling in us, it will be sufficient for us clearly to trace His hand leading us; so long as He is satisfied, we shall be content. When strength and opportunity are granted, at all times, and in all places, we shall work eagerly, constantly for Him; to tell of His love and His power to save to the uttermost will be the dearest employ of our lives; our work will be valued and loved, because it is done by His side, in furtherance of that in which He Himself was once engaged on earth, is now engaged in heaven. Our chiefest joy in fishing for men will be the thought of His joy in every sinner saved through His blood; our delight will be to add to His glory, who is dearer than self and all beside to us. And when Jesus asks us to desist from labour, we will do so with the same decided obedience with which we sought to work. Activity or sufferance should be equally our meat and drink, according to their appointment by Him. Love will make us gladly lay down the most cherished work—that in which our efforts have been owned by His richest blessings, either for change of active service, or for a time of weakness and pain: "they also serve who only stand and wait." Love to Jesus will make the call, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile," very welcome, for who but loves to be left alone to speak with one beloved? and love to man will make solitude precious, because it gives opportunity for continuing in intercession.

Is there not also a force in the expression "seeketh?" Does it not express an effort made to manifest love? If 'Charity seeketh not her own," does it not imply that

Charity does seek for the good of others? Dear readers, let us really strive to rise above the fogs of earth, and get a true view of our position. If we have seen God by the Spirit, and, self-condemned in the light of His holiness, have accepted the garment of Christ's righteousness, then we are here as representatives of Jehovah, the Almighty Eternal One, as heirs of an incorruptible inheritance, placed here for the one purpose of lighting this darkened world. God's will in leaving us here is that He may be glorified in us and by us. Our time on earth is allotted for just as special a mission as was that of Jesus. His was to save, and sanctify, and gladden; and ours is to sanctify and gladden. To do this we must ever be drinking ourselves at the Fountain-head; we have no grace in ourselves, our own spiritual life can be preserved only by renewed infusions of His own. As we draw our own vessel will be filled, and, in overflowing, refresh the parched ground around, whilst yet, in no wise, emptying itself. In Him we must live, and then seek to give forth of that water of holy joy ever welling up in our own hearts, leaving our footprints behind, ever calling and leading Excelsior! and striving, by a winning gentleness, love, and sympathy, to draw unto us fellow-pilgrims and all poor wanderers, that we may pour in of the oil and wine our Master gives us for them. It is the *heart* that must first be right with God before we can thus follow the Charity which "seeketh not her own." Oh, to realise more the solemnity of conscious and unconscious influence, and for more jealous care to lay it at the feet of Jesus! Like Him, secure of an everlasting portion ourselves, and possessing here His love, His strength, and His companionship, can we not afford to sit loose to our earthly portion, and seek to bless

and gladden those who know not our joys, who never yet have tasted, perhaps, the comfort of pouring their sorrows into the ear of Jesus? or who, with an equally saving, yet less strong and cheering faith, are in heaviness and doubt? or, again, those fellow-believers upon whom the Lord in love is laying His chastening hand? And where the sun of prosperity shines, does not that heart call for charity to rejoice disinterestedly with it? or, perhaps, with keen, loving discernment, to seek out the hidden canker which is making that apparent gladness a mockery to the sorrowing heart within—a burden harder to bear than would be the outward trial which receives the sympathy of all?

Could eternity, in all its awful reality, be revealed to us, surely not only love to God, but also pure love to man, would induce us to make ourselves all things to all men, if by any means some could be won by us to be co-sharers of sovereign grace. If we would have saving influence, in God's strength we must enter into their case, and make it our own—not condemning harshly sins and weaknesses, but bearing with them, and striving to bring each soul into the presence of Him who is "altogether lovely," that it may see for itself His worthiness, and learn to hate the filth of its own sinfulness, through contrast with the purity of His holiness. Charity seeketh not her own, and our desire must be, not so much to win love, and be looked on as the means of having won a soul, but to draw all to Jesus, ourselves so visibly walking with Him, looking on Him, rejoicing in Him, that others shall look off our shining faces unto Him.

And now that we have thus faintly imaged to ourselves Him who *is* Love, and the measure of resemblance His people should bear to Him, which of us but stands

condemned for the past, deeply humbled for the time to come? Who that has searched within, but feels how self is woven into our very being, so that, consciously and unconsciously, self-ministry and self-pleasing seem the chief objects of life? Love alone can eradicate self—the love of God transfused into our selfish hearts. We must know Him before we can love Him; oh, then, since this knowledge can only be given by Himself, how eagerly should we search into the Scripture likeness of Him, praying, "Lord, show me Thyself, and *give me grace to love!*"

CHAPTER VIII.

" Subdue the *heart*, and purify the soul,
Then will the words and acts need small control;
These are but outward *indexes* to show
Which way within the blasts of passion blow.
Thy hand, perchance, the shifting vane may bind,
But deem'st thou, then, that thou hast chained the wind?"

A. L. O. E.

CHARITY IS NOT EASILY PROVOKED.

God's Patience with the Antediluvians—With Israel—With every Child—Moses—Trial of enduring meant Provocation—Allowable stirring of Spirit—Little Irritations—Too much Individuality—Pride—Pity for Offender—Preoccupation a Cure for Sensitiveness—Needed Awe—No present Rest for Believers—Painfulness of Declensions—Contrariety of Grace and Nature—No Compromise; Life only through Death—Watchfulness imperative to the End—Solomon's Warning—Impatience at no Evidence of Fruit to Labours—A Soldier's Story—The Philosopher and his Dog—Weaver's Mother.

THE whole plan of God's providence for earth betokens patience. He made everything good, and gave all in subjection into man's hand; laying one restriction only upon him, and that amidst luxurious abundance, would seem hardly a denial. Yet distrust towards his beneficent Creator found root immediately in man's heart; and, disappointed in the fruit of His labour, we might have expected God to withdraw Himself entirely from His creation, and sentence it to unmixed condemnation. But Scripture assures us that it was man who shunned God, and that the offended One, as usual, sought His wonted evening communion in the lovely garden with the offender: there tender love, whilst of necessity uttering the threatened curse, softened it with the covenant bow of promise. Increase of sin so marred God's fair world, that it repented Him that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart; but He waited, ere He sent the deluge, till men had determinedly refused the message of

pardon and hope, preached by Noah all the time the ark was preparing.

Perhaps in no part of Scripture is the general character of man's constant rebellion, and God's marvellous slowness to punish for it, more markedly set forth than in the history of His chosen people Israel. To the lonely shepherd on Horeb He appears, and announces the gracious tidings, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people, and have heard their cry; I know their sorrows, and I am come down to deliver them, and to bring them unto a good land and a large; come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people, the children of Israel out of Egypt." Yet on the very threshold of his mission God's messenger was mistrusted; and this thanklessness was followed, alas! by continual repetitions of the same murmuring, faithless, ungrateful ebullitions of discontent. The wondrous miracles wrought for them in Egypt induced not trust by the banks of the Red Sea. At Marah, at Rephidim, and in the desert of Zin, they murmured for water; in the desert of Sin, and at Taberah, for food. Yet water from the stony rock, and angel's food from heaven, were lavished on them; then, contrary to the express command given, some kept of the manna till morning; some looked for it on Sundays. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, rose against God's chosen leader, and aspired to his supremacy,—even Miriam and Aaron envied his authority. Ten, out of the twelve spies, tried to inspire the people with doubts as to the feasibility of God's promise of inheritance being fulfilled, and only too readily did they petulantly murmur. God told them that on account of their sin they should not enter Canaan; immediately they strove to push their way into it by the

nearest road. And so from the time that their children possessed the land, they ceased not to provoke the Lord's justice to slay them; intermarrying with the heathen, they joined in their idolatrous worship, and, as at Sinai, so at Dan and Bethel, erected golden calves. Yet all these provocations failed to make God swerve from His purposes of love; and time and space would fail to track the many other innumerable instances in which chosen Israel received long-suffering mercy in return for wilful rebellion and ingratitude. How strikingly, in many cases, is shown forth His desire for the sinner to repent and escape condemnation, by the infliction of present punishment, sent not in hasty wrath, but in patient sufferance! as with Jonah, when disobediently and cowardly he fled, afraid to deliver God's message in the rebellious city; *in* the punishment he found life, through it he was led to repentance. And the sufferance granted to Israel is in like freeness vouchsafed to us Gentiles also. Who that obeys David's injunction, "Commune with your own heart, and be still," but has the testimony of his own experience confirming this truth, that God has not been easily provoked with him? but must confess, that if hereafter unsaved, it will be only through his own trampling under foot and despising this long-suffering? Little can we appreciate the extent of God's patience,—waiting for the sundered children, whilst men have been mocking at His delay, blaspheming Him every day; and even His chosen have continually followed the devices and desires of their own hearts. Brightly did it shine forth in the gentle walk of God manifest in the flesh; no angry or impatient word ever passed His lips, though His enemies set traps to catch Him in His speech, though evil insinuations were constantly hurled against Him, and all that

human ingenuity could devise, was said and done to provoke Him to speak evil. The more believers are attuned to the spirit of their God in holiness, the more will they realise the truth that God is being continually grieved by each human being, His patience tried by their presumptuous and hidden sins, but that His is the love which "is not easily provoked."

Of this stamp, therefore, must our love be: may a graft from *the* root not only be implanted in us, but may it be watered by the dews, and warmed by the sunshine, of heaven, till the transparent, holy patience of our walk testifies to the reality of its being a plant of the heavenly Husbandman's own planting! Love suffereth long, would seem to imply patience under prolonged trial of love; love is not easily provoked, the control of feelings at the moment of sudden provocation—the returning with gentle patience efforts made purposely to provoke. The nature of this love is sweetly evidenced in the life of Moses. Comfortably living in the service of his father-in-law, his love for his countrymen was such as led him to return to the stranger-land of their captivity, and in faith undertake the thankless task of leading them out to the land of promise: the gratitude shown him for this was envy, rebellion, and mistrust. Yet Moses bore with all, and entreated blessings for the people when their sins had drawn on them the wrath of God. Once only, throughout those many years of provocation, is it recorded that he *gave vent* to impatience; and the bitter disappointment allotted him as chastening for that unpremeditated sin goes far to make apparent God's detestation of a spirit easily made angry.

Charity is not easily provoked; it submits to any insult or unfriendly, undeserved treatment from, or for

the sake of, loved ones; to slights, imputation of bad motives, or fickleness. Knowing that irritation or consolation, provocation or sympathy, can come only to us, even if the instrumentality be human, as an all-wise Father seeth our need to be, it receives all as good gifts, patiently, thankfully recognising the heavenly source of the mundane stream. Peculiarly painful is this discipline through the creature; David felt it so when he said, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me;" and touchingly it is written concerning the son of David, "One shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends;" therefore is special grace needed to enable a man to receive gently, and be "exercised" by, such provocations. True is it that "death and life are in the power of the tongue;" and difficult as it is to restrain angry words, it is still more so to preserve an unruffled peace within, when "in the midst of irritating and aggravating enemies, who watch for our halting, seek to make us speak unadvisedly with our lips, and who would rejoice to make us stumble and fall!"[1] Still, hard as the task may be, it must be learnt; the copy set us must be studied and imitated. The command given is to forgive "until seventy times seven," with the assurance that "he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Yet it is not callousness that love requires; such is not more godlike than sensitiveness; but it needs that loving patience should spring

* The Rev. E. H. Bickersteth.

from, and ever rest in, this strength, "*Thou* wilt keep him in perfect peace."

There is an easy provocation or stirring of spirit allowed in the command, "Be ye angry, and sin not," of which Scripture affords examples; amongst others, in the Master Himself and His chosen apostle to the Gentiles. This kind arises from holiness of spirit, which makes sin unbearable; but love and compassion for the sinner are integral parts of such godly displeasure. Very different, though, is the provocation here referred to; which arises from selfishness, from the jarring of others' wills with our own, from insults to our own self-love; or, if the cause of provocation be the same, very different is the spirit in which it is received; passion, irritability, and natural impatience ruling, instead of godly forbearance, which would meekly, patiently try to make the sinner repent his sin. "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly;" he injures his own conscience and the cause of his God.

And yet how many, and what little, things *do* provoke! Intentional and unmeant offences, great and little vexations. Even amongst believers, how difficult of ejection is this root of bitterness found! how many "Christians are willing to speak openly and freely for God on appropriate occasions! they sustain their professions and declarations by their contributions and alms; they would not hesitate a moment to undergo bonds and imprisonments in support of the truth; and, at the same time, with an inconsistency almost unaccountable, they often, very often, exhibit a clouded brow, and a restless, unquiet temper, under those common dispensations which characterise every day and every hour. The amount of this

evil is incalculable. It is here, without looking further, that they may often find the worm in their bud of promise — the secret canker that consumes their flower of hope."[1] It would be impossible to enumerate all the causes of provocation; so varied are they, from the differences of character and circumstances, that it might be, in a long list of them, those peculiar to you, reader, might not appear. Without attempting, therefore, to name any, I would ask you to search into your own heart and life, and find out those which stir up evil feelings in you, thus giving evidence of the imperfection of your love towards God and man; bring these into the light of eternity: what will be your estimate of their importance after the flight of time? Learn thus their littleness; yet since God, in making the Christian, does not unmake the man, since He requires no stoical indifference to suffering, and since we know from experience that, however trifling these causes may appear in our calmer, holier moments, they *will*, doubtless, seem mightier when we are taken at unawares in the midst of life's business, let us more fervently pray for a larger outpouring of the Spirit of love, let us resolve to be on our guard constantly against yielding to what must sometimes be irritating to nature. And surely the uncertainty of life should be a help to us in making and keeping this resolution; in withholding us from adding one pang to those who may already have a bitter cup for their portion, whose days are numbered, and who are hearing from us, perhaps, almost the last sounds of earth to which they will ever listen. There is a voice for each of us when we return provocation, or cause pain by unwarranted irritation, in

[1] Upham.

the touching appeal, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me?*"

One cause of our aptness to take offence is that we are as yet so little united as one body to Christ; there is so much self yet even in our religion; so much dwelling on, and judging by, "my experience," instead of, with large-hearted sympathy, learning to look on others; and thus seeing that the Spirit is not confined to one mode of acting; so much of my work, instead of our work. What love demands is that we should be drawn more, not only individually, but collectively, to our Head; "then there should be no schism in the body;" then should we as intuitively shun what pains others, as that which pains ourselves.

Pride is generally at the root of readiness to feel aggrieved, and manifest irritability. Surely the word "easily" has a humbling and warning voice for us; it tells of a natural affinity in the heart to a devilish enthronization of self; of a traitor in the camp, ready at any moment to throw open a gate to the enemy. And sadly true it indeed is, that there are seeds of evil within each heart, which have a fearful susceptibility of development; though the natural heart rebels against such a painful admission, and scarcely understands its degradation from original purity. Alas! as Coleridge says, "the largest part of mankind are nowhere greater strangers than at home." If such, though, be our sickness, if the great Physician assure us of the natural proneness in our hearts to "fall out by the way," how critical our position! It is very possible for us at any moment to fall; looking back through the past, cannot we remember many mornings when we set out with good resolves, yet at night sought our pillow with shame? God often, in mercy,

allows His children to fall into open transgression, just to impress on their hearts the sense of their own naturalization, as it were, to sin, their estrangement to pure love; that their pride may be humbled, that they may be made conscious of their frailty, of the evil which yet cleaveth to them, that, humiliated even in the sight of man, condemned by nature's judgment, they may realise how fearful their unholiness, how utter their unworthiness, in the sight of God! for anything that serves as a successful warning, anything that humbles, anything that drives from every confidence but Christ, is good.

When a believer knows provocation to be *intended*, should he not rather pity the offender for being in the power of Satan, and by returning gentleness seek to gain his love? should he not habitually walk in a spirit of loving-kindness, dealing out affection even to the unthankful and unkind, that they may learn that such is his Master? Should he not look on anything naturally trying to flesh in them, if really evil, as a hindrance on Satan's part, which ought rather to deepen his compassionate love?

What we would bear for, or from, our hearts' few naturally cherished ones, that the love of Christ constrains to bear of all. There is selfishness in loving only where we are beloved; it is Christ-like to love where we are provoked. And if we thought more on the consequences too often following easy provocation; that acceptance of the challenge by the heart leads to recrimination of lip, and too often, as is, alas! proved in the world's history, to retributive acts; that "the beginning of strife is like the letting out of water;" we should dread more yielding to this sin, so lightly esteemed amongst men unless productive of startling results. Again, feeling how delicately our own spirits are con-

stituted, so that a slightly rough touch sometimes sends a thrill of agony through the whole frame; and having known, from our own experience, that deeply may go the stroke which yet shows no wound, let us be more tenderly careful, more jealous over ourselves, in dealing with others. As one of the benefits of sanctified sorrow is that we should learn to comfort others with that comfort wherewith the Lord has soothed us, so they who know most of the difficulty of this lesson, of wrestling against quick irritation, should be most watchful to shield others from the breath of this cutting wind.

Different temptations are prepared as baits by Satan, each of the kind suited to his prey, wherewith to entrap souls; one, therefore, may unconsciously be made his tool against another, not seeing any offensiveness in his word or work; yet even this might be to a great extent avoided, if we made a more brotherly study of each other's foibles, and more prayerfully and earnestly strove to give out only blessing. If such were our continued, hearty aim, we should have less thought for personal affronts; wrapt up in our mission-work of love, we should ourselves reap a blessing in passing unnoticed, through preoccupation of mind, what would otherwise have provoked sin! How much we lose, and how much the enemy gains, when we disgrace our profession of love!

The thought has been suggested to me by a dear Christian friend, with what awe we ought daily to enter on our walk as God's representatives! and again, how it helps to lower the standard of Christianity, and how it surprises on-lookers—not professing, as we, to bear such a solemn calling—when we look lightly on our work, and walk as those who have nought but self-pleasing before them! Strange, our want of awe—filial awe! not of the

fear which is cast out by love, but of solemn appreciation of the trust reposed in us; of the unearthliness of the model set us for imitation; of the entire self-consecration and self-abnegation required of us; and of the incessant need we have of drawing down power to enable us to fulfil our calling. Oh, reader, pray—pray harder, more "tumultuously," than you have ever done before, for grace to learn your own proneness to share in evil, and to resist it in His strength, who has mercifully shown you that all your sins were nailed to the cross of Jesus. We are "easily" led astray, from our want of prayer, and of humble reliance on the alone Source of strength: thus we are often taken at unawares; and though for us (as the cities of refuge of old) the Ark Christ is ever open, still gratitude to Him, who has forgiven so much, and pitying love for man, who may suffer through our evil example, should nerve us to be ever repelling temptation, ever looking ahead, that it may not leap out on us from some covert shade. Specially should we make ourselves well acquainted with the snares into which we most often and unthinkingly fall. The number of these, and our extreme ignorance and weakness incapacitating us for either avoiding them, or escaping out of them, when caught, necessitates, as our only safety, our being ever in the Lord, ever wearing His *whole* armour, ever experiencing the life of God in our soul.

Here therefore, in one sense, is *no rest* for the believer; at no time is he safe from Satan's machinations; at any step of the way he may be attacked; therefore he need ever be carrying his defensive weapons ready burnished. And because the enemy is as wily as he is strong, vigilant, and malignant, and knows well how to adapt his attack with the greatest likelihood of ensuring success, how to

seize an unguarded moment, and which are the weak points; because he now storms openly, now plausibly approaches as a friend, now takes cowardly aim when our armour is for a moment put off—our weapons laid aside; therefore our only safeguard is in the guardianship of the Shepherd of Israel. Jesus knew this when He prayed for us, "Father, *keep* them;" and those who best know themselves thankfully stay themselves on God and His strength, as all their hope.

Love caught from God is not easily provoked, because it is His breath in the soul; and where its presence is fostered there will be a growing antipathy to aught that savours of selfishness, fretfulness, or unkindness. Sin must ever cleave, though, to the mortal frame, therefore it becomes us to be ever watchful against him who "walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." True, the habitual tenor of the new life is holy love, so that "whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not;" still the believer is liable ofttimes to start aside like a broken bow. One safeguard to him is the extreme painfulness of falls and declensions; sin's wages are death, and the indulgence of evil, even unpresumptuously, without forethought, unhabitually, brings the keenest suffering which it is possible for a soul to bear; it draws a veil, a thick cloud, between the soul and God: as it is written, "When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear;" "your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear;" "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face."

How bitterly have many Christians had cause to regret through life sins, disgracing their profession in the eyes of the world, committed in an unguarded hour! Thus it was with Cranmer and Bilney. After devoting their talents in furtherance of the Reformation, in an hour of nature's weakness they recanted. But did the prospect of relief from persecution content them? Far otherwise. With Bilney, especially, the consequent torture of mind was unbearable; his friends tried in vain to solace him, and all felt that the short physical agonies of martyrdom would have been nothing compared to the racking of an accusing conscience. Both martyrs, we know, afterwards nobly died for the truth. Alas! has not every Christian to mourn over many such unguarded moments? May God give us grace heartily to realise, and humbly to confess, that this easiness to be provoked into sin lies at our own door!

Nature is easily provoked, grace is not; and these two, being contrary, have an unceasing warfare in the tabernacle of every child of God. It is no light thing either to yield to, or conquer, a temptation; one of the two warring natures is strengthened in every battle, making that nature fitter to gain in the next assault. The strength of Israel is our only Rock of help therefore, and a needed one, against the flesh, the world, and the devil. A temper, so at variance with nature's, can only be obtained through the indwelling of the Spirit of God; as faith in the finished work, the full atonement, the personal sacrifice of Jesus, secures free pardon for past sin, so prayerful seeking of, humble dependence on, and implicit obedience to, the Spirit, will enable us, through His imparted strength, to obtain sanctification: but, whilst the first needs but the *look* to the cross, the latter is a

work of time; a work to accomplish which is one of the chief reasons for which we are placed here. As oaks take years to bring them to perfection, as the husbandman has long to wait for his crops, so is it a life-long work for us to obtain a perfectly Christ-like temper.

Dear reader, all the henceforth of our life must be spent in an untiring warfare, a struggling to get completely rid of the old nature, to have the new life so filling us that there shall be no room for evil. If the root of sin be removed, the fruits of it will of themselves decay. Hence Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them;" the presence of evil fruit betokening, from the analogy of nature, likewise the presence of an evil root. Thence, if we are easily provoked, our irritability is outwardly expressive of a hellish feeling within; and, therefore, it is not only occasionally subduing the visible outburst of passion that we need, but the rooting up the plant itself. Only through death is life, therefore each believer has to die with Christ, ere he can be quickened and live together with Him. And in the uprooting of the old nature, and the building up the new man, God the Holy Spirit is the blessed, almighty co-worker with us; not only showing us what we ought to do, but helping us to fulfil the same. He is our Working Guide, strengthening us in the hourly pilgrimage — the oft-repeated conflict; and training in us the temper and disposition of the Father who has adopted us, giving us the experience of sons. How ought we, therefore, who desire this heavenly love to be perfected in us, to honour and wait on Him, the alone Giver of grace!

In the ardour of grateful first love, the believer sometimes sets rejoicingly and boldly forth, looking forward almost gladly to the expected cross — the trial of faith;

but in the after long day and night watches, which seldom entail any outward glory, either of engagement or conquest, but generally call only for a withholding from that which gives offence, unnoticed by any, still more often than in the occasional exciting battle, he is apt to lose "the beginning of his confidence;" in the time of great trial, he buckles on the armour tighter, and looks only for help to the sword of the Lord, but, in lesser conflicts, he is prone to trust in himself, to walk sometimes alone, to become immersed in the business of the world. "We are made," though, "partakers of Christ" *only* "*if* we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast *unto the end.*" Our mistrust in self, and faith in Christ, must be a really experienced motive-principle at every step of our way.

May Solomon's awful warning be more heeded by us, "Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him!" Why? because the outward expression of evil bespeaks the corresponding root within; and expression is given to very little compared to what is felt below the surface; they, therefore, who speak or show anger testify to the little control yet exercised over the spirit. May the dread of having this painful testimony in ourselves make us plead more fervently, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips!"

Once more; the believer is sometimes provoked to impatience when he sees every effort made to rescue a wanderer fail; love and pity for him then turn into a kind of condemnatory disgust, and patience becomes exhausted. Such has not been the Lord's manner to us and our forefathers, and therefore such provocation must not be ours; we must follow the sinner, not denying our

sympathy even where we see him wrong—we must remember that we know not how sorely he may be tempted of Satan—that he may be a chosen vessel, now undergoing an experience which shall hereafter be a mighty power in teaching him how to win such as he once was.

I remember an instance of the attainment of such love, brought to my notice during the Indian mutiny. A Christian soldier came to me one day in deep anxiety of soul for his unconverted elder, and only, brother, entreating me to see and speak with him, and to pray for him. To interest me the more in his case, he gave me a sketch of their family history. His father, an industrious, clever man, had been clerk in one of the large mercantile firms of Lancashire, and, at the time of his death, had saved a nice little sum, wherewith he proposed shortly to buy a cottage and bit of land, to which he could retire, and there spend the remainder of his days in ease. He was a pious Christian, but, like Eli of old, had no command over his children, whom his delight was unrestrictedly to gratify. Not so his wife, who earnestly sought to be found in the ways of Abraham, and who, with as deep and truer love, strove to command and lead her only two children in the ways of righteousness. God blessed her efforts with the younger son, whose heart was early opened to receive the truth as it is in Jesus, and who was ever a most dutiful, loving child (as letters, shown me afterwards, from his mother, testified), and an affectionate brother. The elder boy, from childhood to manhood, was in *all* points, save the *one* most needful, like him; though he availed himself of an unbridled conscience, and his father's laxity, and entered often scenes and pleasures where evil propensities were fostered. Attached to his mother, he did not openly

rebel against her wishes, but would forestall his announcement of an intended "lark" to her, by securing the permission of his father, and, with a kiss for farewell, bound away.

He was the father's pet, and though that parent, too, yearned for his soul, he would not deny himself the joy of giving his child present pleasure. Shortly after procuring for both his children situations similar to his own, he died, and then the fruits of misguided love appeared. The elder son, disgusted with the "tameness" of business routine, threw up his situation, and entered on gambling speculations; he lost, and then demanded of his mother the saved hoard. She felt she dared not encourage a life of idleness, but offered to apprentice him to any trade he preferred. Excessively angry, he plunged only deeper into vice, and in mad fits of drunkenness would often, during his brother's absence at office, beat and abuse her. In vain both mother and brother forbore to cast him off, and kept him in shelter and food at their own expense; in vain they pleaded with him to turn whilst yet the day of grace lasted. Bitter reproach was all they received, and more than once they found money abstracted and articles pawned. But they loved him, and, assured of their own eternal inheritance, felt they could bear anything, might he but be won for their Lord. At last one day he came in to his mother, saying, "There, *you've* gone and done it!" and explained that he had enlisted, and was bound for India. Deep was the mother's agony, and earnestly she prayed for light to see her duty; she might buy him off, but he assured her he would only re-enlist, if all her money were not given him. She questioned with her younger son, as to whether this might be done; for herself, she would be content with a crust a-day; but he

and she both felt that it would be wrong to minister to sin, and the prodigal's language and conduct gave little promise that the gift of the money would steady him. But the mother felt he must not go alone; she would give up her best-beloved Benjamin, she would persuade him to enlist into the same regiment, that he might be ever near to use any opportunity of speaking to him the message of salvation. "If ill or wounded, maybe," she thought, "he will be prepared to hear: and what if no Christian were near him? Her Benjamin should not lose thereby, for she would leave her money to him, and go for her few remaining days to the workhouse: sorrow and anxiety had aged her fast, and she would not be long a burden to the parish!" It was a fearful struggle to the young man, to give up mother, home, and situation for an unkind, though a beloved brother. But his mother's tearful entreaties decided him, that this was the path marked out for him of God: one point only she must yield; her home must be with a relative, and enough must be drawn from the money for her comfortable maintenance. The parting was very sore, but love strengthened mother and son; they parted for ever, for where they were next to meet no farewells are ever heard. I know not whether the young soldier has yet rejoined her, but this I do know, that love gained the victory; and after many weeks, and a few months—after bearing with repulses, sullenness, now silence, now abuse — after tending him in sickness, and ministering to him with unwearied brotherly affection, and waiting for him in prayerful faith—Benjamin saw that long-sought son and brother, that deeply-loved wanderer, brought a penitent to the Saviour's cross. The mother's heart broke under the parting gift, but she rejoiced in heaven over the tidings

of her saved child, and her doubly-blessed younger son, for "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Charity is not easily provoked, but is patient under all circumstances. Few have attained to the gentleness and self-control of the great Sir Isaac Newton. Called one day out of his study, he found on his return that his little dog had jumped on the table, overthrown a candle, and thus set light to his papers; undoing the work of years. "Oh, Diamond, Diamond, thou little knowest the mischief thou hast done me!" was all the answer of the Christian philosopher.

Richard Weaver's mother affords another of the many instances we might adduce of this kind of patient love. Her ungodly husband strove to hinder her efforts to lead her children to God; but she laboured on in prayer and entreaties. As a child, Richard gave some little promise of a softened heart, but this soon passed away like "a morning cloud, and as the early dew." "My poor old mother," is his testimony in after-life, "soon found a change in me, and when she knew her boy was beginning to lie and swear, I thought it would have broken her heart. At night, when I went to rest, she watched, and seeing I got into bed without praying, she came and fell down on her knees by the bedside, and pleaded with God to have mercy on her boy." On one occasion, after spending the night in drinking and quarrelling, he reached home at break of day, bearing the traces of his revelry. The first sound which fell upon his ears was the faithful mother praying God to save her son. As soon as his knock was heard, the poor old woman ran to the door. When she had given him a chair, and ministered to him as he needed, she knelt down and prayed again. But

while she prayed the lad cursed, swearing that he would murder her if she did not leave off. He went up to bed, but she followed him, and kneeling down again poured out the abundance of her complaint and grief to her Heavenly Father. Her reprobate son, in a rage, sprang out of bed, and grasping her grey hair, shook her while on her knees. She took hold of his arm with her trembling hands and said, "This is hard work, Lord, to nurse and watch our children till they begin to be men, and then to hear them say they will murder us, for asking Thee to save them. But though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee." Then, turning to her son, she said, "I will never give thee up."

He went on from worse to worse; he fled from his mother's home, where her prayers and example were ever a tacit reproof, and joined company with the lowest of the low. Still his mother prayed on, and wrote from time to time. One day he sat in his accustomed place in the public-house, and a letter came to him; a companion read it, and there were the same old words, "I will never give thee up, my child." After the young man had read it, Richard wanted to burn it. "Nay, it will never do to burn the praying mother's letter," he replied, and with tears added, "I wish I had a praying mother." Downward and downward Weaver sank in his evil course. Such was his misery that, on one occasion, he had sharpened his razor to destroy himself, when the thought of his mother's agony deterred him. Still she persevered in pleading for him; night and day, the language of her heart was, "As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you!" Twenty-five years that loving mother prayed on without a token of hope; but at last the answer came; the glad tidings

reached her, "Behold, he prayeth!" and, hastening to her chamber, she knelt and praised a prayer-hearing God. Fervently she was afterwards permitted to rejoice in his abundant labours for Christ; for he to whom much had been forgiven, loved much. And when Mary Weaver had to pass through the dark valley, the prayers of her once ungodly child were her stay and comfort.[1]

"Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it;" many provocations will but intensify it, even as those trees strike deepest root which are most exposed to the rough shaking of the sharp and raging wind.

[1] Mothers in Council.

CHAPTER IX.

" When, with a member crushed, the sufferer lies
In helpless anguish, who would mocking say,
The others are uninjured; therefore, rise!
Yet such the sinner's madness who would weigh
His virtues 'gainst his errors, disobey
One law, yet, keeping others, fear no fall.
Oh, self-deceiver! turn, for mercy pray:
Who sins in one point, guilty is of all."

A. L. O. E.

" Ah, wherefore persecute ye me?
'Tis hard ye so in love should be
With your own endless woe.
Know, though at God's right hand I live,
I feel each wound ye reckless give
To the least saint below.

I in your care my brethren left,
Not willing ye should be bereft
Of waiting on your Lord.
The meanest offering ye can make,
A drop of water, for love's sake,
In heaven, be sure, is stored.

So, as we walk our earthly round,
Still may the echo of that sound
Be in our memory stored.
Christians! behold your happy state;
Christ is in these, who round you wait;
Make much of your dear Lord!"

KEBLE.

CHARITY THINKETH NO EVIL.

The Intrinsic Holiness of God—Necessity for ejecting the Satanic Infusion, Sin, by the Root—Fearful Evidence gone before to Judgment—Grace for Grace—Injected Thoughts—The Believer thinks no evil of God—Perfect Trust—Danger peculiar to Joy—To Sorrow—Difficulty of resting confidently when Loved Ones are passing through trying Discipline—The Silver Lining to Clouds—God's Faithfulness—The Joy of Afflictions—Little Joey—God will have All to be Saved—His Love can never think evil against Man—Love lays hold on Bright Points of Character—Jealousy, Scandal, Disunion, amongst Christians—Latitude to be given save in Essentials—Rowland Taylor.

THE subject would seem to comprise two chief heads: 1st. The effect of God's indwelling love, in bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; 2nd. The consequent restraint with which that love would check our thoughts of fellow-creatures. The last, perhaps, is most commonly looked on as referred to here; but surely the first is equally important; indeed, is it not the ground-work of the other, since the love here spoken of is not natural amiability, or the attraction towards special ones only, but the habitual tone of love towards every fellow-creature, based on the principle, *for His* sake? "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Each of these two heads naturally includes two other divisions,—"Love thinketh no evil either *of* or *against* the beloved."

Turning to Him who is the Fountain-head of all love,

let us mark how the first head is fulfilled in Him. "Charity *thinketh* no evil." Evil cannot find any resting-place in the heart of God, because it is painful to Himself—it is a property alien and inimical to His very nature. Holiness is His peculiar attribute. How holy He is, human thought may not fathom. Who can by searching find out God, or find out the Almighty unto perfection? Much we may know of the nobility, power, beauty, and goodness of His mind through the wondrous works of His creation. They, and their preservation, and the wondrous laws which He has made for them, bespeak thought spent on what is glorious and beneficial. And the written testimony of revelation still farther tells the current of His thoughts who thinketh no evil. To do good, to spread gladness, is the result of His thoughts of love; to put down evil, the object of His chastening. And so with Jesus, God incarnate; He "*did* no sin, neither was guile found in His *mouth*," because He thought none; evil deeds and evil words being the offspring of evil thoughts. His heart, whence all feelings proceed, was uncorrupt; hence the fruit His life bore was pure and holy. He could not think evil, because He was one with the Father, clothed for a time with a body subject to infirmities, but not to sins. He was "tempted like as we are," but there was no affinity in His soul to evil; therefore He walked through temptation unscathed. But little can we understand the thoughts of Jesus; what they were, how unstained by self and sin; how riveted on God and His glory; with what undeviating singleness of aim ever planning the bestowal of Divine graces on the people He came to save! Yet, since "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," we trace in the gospels their nature, and

thence we learn enough of them to enable us to follow Him, not in His steps only, but in His thoughts.

Oh! to realise the importance of restraining, checking, evil thoughts; the root which, if not at once weeded out, and continually kept under, afterwards springing up, bears habits of evil—a second nature—most fearfully difficult to overcome. We are apt to forget that "fornication, covetousness, which is idolatry, and filthiness," are sins classed, by God's inspiration, with "foolish talking;" and this is a fruit of foolish thinking. "The pure in heart" shall alone "see God;" for an evil heart defiles all with which it comes in contact; and it is written, that nought that defileth shall enter the land where His face shall be seen. Not, dear reader! that we can "bring a clean thing out of an unclean;" not that we shall ever be able here to say, "My heart is clean;" not that on earth it will ever be true of us, that we think no evil. Alas, no! But we see here through the glass of revelation darkly, one of those traits of faultless beauty inherent to our God, after the attainment of which we must struggle; and, like Jesus, be "straitened" till the same be perfected in us. Surely, if we more vividly realised that evil is the property peculiar to Satan; that every particle of it in any heart is an infusion, as it were, of His own nature, (a nature which is at enmity to God's), surely we should more jealously guard the entrance of our hearts, and more heartily beseech God to show us sin as it seems in His pure sight!

If the thought of foolishness be sin, how awful must be the amount of evidence written against every soul in the book of condemnation! Dear reader! pray for yourself, that this point may be more startlingly brought home to your soul. For the purpose of showing forth

God's spotless holiness, were the sacrifices ordained of old; and though we are privileged to live under the Gospel dispensation, where these ceremonial rites are no longer needed as types, seeing that the Son of God has made one sacrifice for ever, still the same God is our God, His holiness is the same, His justice as strict as ever: punishment shall follow, now as then, all breaches of the commandments, unless the guilty sinner take refuge in the appointed way, and, washing in the blood that cleanseth from all sin, henceforth yield himself unto God "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable;" and "his members as instruments of righteousness."

Salvation and sanctification are inseparably connected in God's plan for every redeemed sinner. The invitation is free, unrestricted, to all who will come—all who thirst —all who want pardon. Faith to look to Jesus, to accept His finished work, is alone needed by the vilest sinner (and this faith is the gift of God: "of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." God asks only for that which He gives us the power to give; "not sufficient of ourselves to help ourselves, our sufficiency is of God." He gives the graces He requires — blessed assurance!) One look to the cross, one cry for mercy to the bleeding Saviour, and all past sins are blotted out of the book of remembrance—cast into the depths of the sea. But, in accepting the robe of Christ's righteousness, the forgiven sinner becomes enrolled under the banner of a new Master, and that Leader's desire for each of His soldiers is, that they should follow where He has led, attain to the same likeness, labour at the same work, and be, as far as possible, counterparts of Himself. Oh, therefore, let us beseech the Spirit of God to write this truth on the tablet of our hearts — that "perfect love

thinketh no evil!" Had we more love, we should intuitively shun anything which causes pain to Him above. Here, dear reader! is a theme deserving our prayerful study, a cause in which our every effort should be engaged against the enemy. Here is a great work, to be done in the stillness of a sick-room, as much as in the daily life of active ministration — to learn what is holiness, and make it ours — to search out all sinfulness, and expunge it from our hearts. Till we have attained perfect purity, we have not attained perfect love; but He who has asked both from us will give grace to meet the required grace. In this great, life-long undertaking, whilst the soul "followeth hard" after God, it must yet, according to the language of another translation, "hang" upon Him. We must continually make the effort, yet the grace to do so can be only a given one from above. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities."

Surely, that solemn sentence of the Lord's own uttering, "He that is not with me is against me;" the remembrance that whoso sinneth (that is, whoso giveth way to unholiness, whether of thought or action) fighteth "*against*" God, will henceforth stir us up more, dear reader! continually to search and see whether our love is of that heavenly kind which "thinketh no evil."

One word, ere leaving this part of our subject, as to those fearful thoughts which Satan suggests sometimes to the mind; thoughts which even we ourselves shudder at, struggle against; thoughts which we feel to have been injected by a supernatural power, and not the natural offspring of our own evil hearts; thoughts which drive us far from God, by representing the Bible message as full of wrath, curse, and promise of eternal condemnation; thoughts engendering blank despair; thoughts of blas-

phemy and wickedness, from which even our sin-stained nature recoils! Here is an unavoidable evil contingent upon a sojourn in this world, through which Jesus nevertheless passed undefiled, and out of which He desires, not His people to be taken, but in which to have them purified and trained for the service of the sanctuary above. Hence we learn that the presentation of evil to the mind, whether through outward or spiritual agency, does not necessitate sin in that mind, even as we see, in His temptation, Jesus had evil pictured to His thought; endued with powers of hearing and imagination, it could not be otherwise than that He should have realised mentally the picture presented to Him. In this was no sin; even as God knows good and evil; but did this forced thought find a resting-place in the mind, were it thought upon, encouraged, and allowed to bear fruit in action, that were sin. Compassed, therefore, as we are with infirmities, subject to subtle temptations, our only safety lies in keeping close to our Leader, pondering on His revealed word, making that word the test of every thought suggested, as well as of every action on which we seem called to enter.

Again, love thinketh no evil of God, doubts not—has no dark thoughts touching His person or acts; perfect love has unquestioning faith in God. Humbly acknowledging His unsearchable greatness, love realises that there are mysteries of His providence, trying now very to nature; that He oft

> "Moves in a mysterious way,
> His wonders to perform;"[1]

yet has perfect peace, unruffled trust, believing in His

[1] Cowper.

character of love, that what seems dark now shall be made clear hereafter; these very mysteries proving the brightest points in His chain of loving acts—that then, when we are able to bear it, He will tell us the hidden things in doctrine, the dark things in providence.

When once a soul has laid hold on the crucified Saviour, and believed in the Godhead having given the greatest proof possible of love and goodwill to mankind, and to itself individually, it must reasonably feel henceforth with Paul, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" God *having* so loved the world, and *willing* that *all* men should be saved, must ever love it; His interest in it can never flag; His efforts to convince of sin, and draw to Himself, can never cease till all the ransomed are gathered in; and it is but natural to believe that, having such love towards us, He would not willingly afflict or cause pain in worldly details. His own glory, His own character of truthfulness, are now bound up in the welfare of His people. They are the people of His choice, inexpressibly dear to His heart; and His will is to bring these, His sons, to glory, fitting them during a temporary sojourn in the world to enjoy Him for ever; giving them opportunities of showing their devoted attachment to Him, by a self-emptied, holy, obedient life; and enabling them, if they will, to add to their coming joy, by gathering jewels which shall survive time, and shine in their King's crown for ever. All, therefore, that man needs to ensure true happiness is to secure a part in Christ's salvation, to look well to it that He is grounded on the Rock of Ages, that he is grafted into the true Vine; and then, one with

Christ, and Christ one with him, all is, all must be well; well for time—well for eternity.

Love thinketh no evil of God. When His sunshine gladdens, the friends we love are around us, health and gladness of heart their portion and ours, and bereavements are as yet known to us more by name than experience, when youthful hope is buoyant, and the future looks sparkling and promising, then it is easy to rejoice in God's will; easy to say, "My cup runneth over." At such times, the temptation is rather to rejoice in the gifts, and forget the Giver. But when the shadows lengthen, when many dear ones are parted from us by land and sea; when sickness and trials have visited them and us; when voices are silent, and places vacant, and forms mouldering, of friends to whom we once fondly clung, and maturer age has proved the falsity of much of earth's glittering tinsel, then—then—with heart and flesh failing, does Satan tempt us to have hard thoughts of Him whose name is Love; then into the aching, desponding, lonely heart, does he delight to inject fears and doubts. He represents sorrow as an unmingled calamity—sign only of revengeful wrath from Him who holds our fate in His hands. He brings to our remembrance the sins of the past, and would feign make us believe we have sinned beyond the limits of pardon; he makes us undervalue present mercies; and by fostering an overbalanced tenderness, would induce us to rebel against the holy justice of God against sinners, and to murmur under the present chastening laid on us, or some we love. Such, then, is a time to prove whether ours is a shoot from the plant of true heavenly love.

The believer's path is one of varied discipline, and

each believer's journey is marked out for him by the Friend who died for him, according to his character and need, to fit him for his prepared place above. Each, therefore, must

"Take all on trust a little while."[1]

Many find it easier to trust God for themselves than for their loved ones; easier to believe their own changeful discipline needed than that of others; easier to rejoice in their own tribulations than in those of others. Dear reader! the truth we need to stay our souls upon always is, that the God of love orders all, and that He makes all things work together for good to them that love God. Why should we fear for those whom He loves? Satan may suggest that some we love are not of His own, and therefore they have the bitter without the sweet, which softens the portion of the redeemed. Oh! for grace just to lay these aching, questioning hearts bare to Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, and then rest and believe; believe, even though the darkness thickens. "He doeth all things well;" He loves our beloved with an affection deeper, truer far, than our own; for them, as for us, He will do what is best. Even if He explained now all His doings to us, we could not bear them; therefore let us rest content, because Infinite Love is content. Whilst we have time and opportunity, let us untiringly seek the spiritual and temporal weal of all we can; but the sorrows we cannot remove, the sicknesses of soul and body we cannot heal, oh! let us trust them with our precious Saviour Jesus, and not dishonour Him by mistrustful fears and overweening grief.

[1] Keble.

His love may send the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet us or a loved one. Were it removed in answer to importunate prayer, the afflicted one might be left to eternal sorrows. Better, wiser far, in every case, "to lie passive in His hands, and know no will but His." Ofttimes "now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds," yet the promise is, that where the storm is, there shall the bright bow appear. Oh! not in anger, not in wrath, comes the dark cloud over the sinner's head; love would feign startle out of some false dream, that the soul may be preserved for glory. And a loving child believes this—welcomes the rod, because it knows a Father's hand holds the other end; that knowledge is enough; the Father, who gave the Son of His love, will only afflict "if need be," and better far His loving correction in time, than present false tenderness, ruining both soul and body eternally. "Perfect love casteth out fear;" it wholly trusts itself, and all it clings to, with God.

Dear reader! we, who have gone through deep waters, who have known partings for a time on earth, want, sickness, pain, or weariness; we, who have stood often on Jordan's brink ourselves, and known sinking and suffering; or who have watched dear ones as they were passing away to the unknown country, and with bursting hearts realised they were gone; oh! have we not found our God true to His promise of love, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Are we not unceasingly receiving bounteous tokens of His loving-kindness? Do we not often hear His voice speaking to our souls the very

words of sympathy, comfort, or instruction we need? We could not think evil of Him whose eye we see bent on us; whose hand we feel in ours, guiding us, shielding us, embracing us! When He removes the cherished delight of our hearts, He desires to fill the void with more of His own dear self; when He sends sickness, it is that alone, apart from life's sin and bustle, He may whisper to us the precious knowledge of Himself, and of His own thoughts. It is sin, not God, that has filled this lovely creation with sorrow; He made everything good and happy; and, marred as it now is, His loving aim is to restore it to more than its pristine beauty and gladness. Sin, therefore, is the sting of sorrow; the words may seem to contradict each other, but sorrow has its own peculiar joy; where sin is forgiven, and self is undergoing crucifixion, there sorrow hath its abundant consolations. The furnace of affliction, with the presence of the Son of God, is a garden of delight to the believer; He can make the spirit to leap with joy, and bound with thankfulness, when to the eye of sense there is nothing but pain, weakness, and the absence of life's choicest blessings. God's comfort is a secret, but He tells it to those who, for His name's sake, bear patiently the cross; and in that secret is a source of real gladness, which makes the wilderness blossom as the rose. So much of His love is revealed to the afflicted one, so much of His presence is given to the secluded sufferer, that they feel theirs is a portion peculiarly rich; every drop in their cup is sweetened. Far from thinking evil of God, His own deeply-taught ones luxuriate in His perfect character, and delight to trace the wisdom and love which has directed their way all their life long.

Oftentimes life's sea rages wildly, and our barks seem "borne backward from the longed-for harbour; yet, mounting billow after billow, wave on wave o'erriding, tempest-tossed and shattered, still, still they near the haven evermore."[1] It is well! it is sweet! is love's ascription of praise and unwavering trust, not only in hope of future rest, but also in experience of present rest, already quickened and raised together with Christ, and made to sit in heavenly places with Him. The sound of His voice now in the storm, "It is I," is a bright earnest of His future acceptance, when He cometh to take His kingdom. And the assurance that every step, alike in joy or sorrow, sees us

"Nearer home than e'er we've been before,"[2]

fills the heart with holy rapture, as we take up David's words,—"*so* He bringeth us to the haven where we would be!"

This joy in sorrow—this praise of God when He afflicts—is no unreal fancy, no painted imagery. All God's children can more or less set to their seal, that hidden comforts, that unspeakable joys, are given in dark days, enabling them to rejoice in the trial of their faith.

This was the experience of a dear little sufferer who only last year entered into his eternal rest. Naturally sharp and clever, and of a studious turn of mind, little Joey had made progress at the national school, where he took real pleasure in his studies, and resolved that he would train for a pupil-teachership. Having a good

[1] Rev. E. H. Bickersteth. [2] Carey.

voice and ear, he also delighted in being a member of the church choir. Of a quiet, retiring disposition, he was yet very manly, and very proud. In the midst of health and of hopeful anticipation, a slight bruise on the hip laid the child up with the sickness which was to end in death; abscess after abscess formed, confining him to the same wearying posture, reducing him to the extreme of thinness and weakness, till not only the leg was contracted, but the hip and back were one mass of running sores. When first taken ill, Joey was an unconverted boy. Dutiful though he was to his parents, industrious at his studies, well conducted, and a good Bible-scholar, his heart was untouched by grace, and, as he himself allowed, he lived only for himself, to get on, and make a name. But it pleased God, in the stillness of his room, to speak the command, "Let there be light!" and his own helplessness and sinfulness were revealed to the boy, as also the abundant fulness in the Lord Jesus to forgive his sins and renew his heart. Marks of grace were soon and increasingly apparent in him; the impatience under suffering, noticed at first, was prayerfully and resolutely struggled against; gratefully he received the visits and teaching of Christian friends, and his Bible was constantly studied. Often he used to say, "I know why God sent me this pain; I was so desperately proud of my book; pride was my idol, and I'm so glad it was broken in time. If I had kept well, I should have gone on trying to learn; it would have taken up all my thoughts; and my singing too! I thought more of getting my voice strong than of the words! I should never have rested till I got to be a pupil-teacher! Ah, if father and mother did but know how much pride I had, they would not worry so to see me laid here!" And when the possibility

of recovery was held out to him, he rejected the thought of its being probable: "I'm too proud; God couldn't trust me, I think, — I'm sure I'd get on well with my book." Far from murmuring, though extreme pain and weariness made him nervous, and restless, and fearful of being touched, he constantly thanked God for the mercy which had arrested him ere evil habits had taken deep root; and yet his very pride had been a safeguard to him against vice of any kind. "Do you think I'd demean myself to fight!" had been his constant answer to any angry school-mates. "You don't know, you can't think," was his greeting to a friend one afternoon, "how very, very happy I have been since you gave me that text yesterday, 'I will be with him in trouble!' I prayed so hard after you left, 'Remember this word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope;' and to-day I've had quite like a treat-day—a great deal better than if I was working at school. I can't thank God enough for sending me trouble." Another day he said, "My dear father! if my illness makes him think, and give his soul to God, it will have been well worth all I have gone through, and oh! no one knows how much that is! only God, and my poor mother and Dr. ——, they can guess a little." One of his last days on earth, as he lay dying, with closed eyes, in the midst of many ejaculatory prayers for "patience," "help to bear the pain in my *poor* leg," he said, "Oh, Jesus! I do thank Thee for having made me know what pain is; now I know better how much my sins cost Thee; they must have been great. Now I can love Thee better, because I can think a little what Thy pain must have been. And I thank Thee, Lord, for staying so many hours in this room with me." Shortly before his death, to his intense joy, his minister adminis-

tered to him the sacrament; it was a joy he had hardly dared hope for, as he was under age, and had not been confirmed. The reverence and solemnity during the service were mingled with a simplicity of holy gladness, which last increased when the sacred rite was over. No shadow of doubt, no thought of other than goodness and mercy having chosen his path of disappointed earthly hopes and severe bodily sufferings, ever crossed his mind; all had been in mercy, in love; his confidence, entirely anchored in Christ's finished work, was steadfast; his thankfulness was hearty; and amongst the many touching messages left to friends, was this testimony to all: "I don't hope,—I know I'm going to Jesus."

2nd. Love thinketh no evil *of* or *against* man. In the latter sense alone can the passage be applied to Him with whom there is no past, present, or future, who knoweth perfectly each character, and who therefore can but judge truly of every individual; yet, seeing from the beginning all that is in their hearts, how unweariedly He labours to win all. And most true is it of His love, that He thinketh no evil *against* His people; judgment is His strange work; and when He sends it, He has first warned the sinner of the consequences of his sin, and the believer that through much tribulation he must enter the kingdom: in either case, their good, not their hurt, is His object. Though no chastening, for the present, seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, yet His hope in sending it is, that peradventure the warning may be received, and made the means of drawing them closer to the Rock of Ages.

God might well have thought nothing but evil against us, for man's perverted will has marred His beauteous creation, has turned a world of life and gladness into a

world of death and sorrow; and times without number have we, by presumptuous as well as hidden sins, tempted His forbearing love. Truly are we miserable sinners; "we have erred and strayed from His ways like lost sheep; we have offended against His holy laws; we have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us;"[1] but, dear reader! there is precious hope yet, alike for every burdened, stumbling child, as for every unreconciled sinner; "for if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Bind this priceless truth to your heart, hide it there, cling to it, feast on it; it cannot prove false, for God Himself has given it us through His servant; this is the message, that "Charity thinketh no evil;" and since He is Charity, it follows that He thinketh no evil against us. God, who will have all men to be saved, has no purpose of evil against any one. Let not any doctrine stagger us on this point. True, God knows from the beginning who will accept His pardon, but this foreknowledge hampers none, imposes no constraint on the will of any. The choice is left to every individual; "Choose you whom ye will serve;" "Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death." Jesus died for all; His desire for all is, that they may be saved. At all periods of our life the cry is, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;" "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and let

[1] Prayer-book.

him that heareth say, Come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Here is a truth that fits our soul's necessities; suited for every age of life, every state of mind. There is no doubt of God's willingness to bless; all that man needs is willingness on his part to be saved. "If thou canst believe" is the question. True, all our thoughts, all our diversified acts, all our words, which have proceeded as from a pestilential sepulchre, things done of which no man knew, well explained,—true, all these are known to Him, and are deserving of His wrath. True, that there have been evil thoughts and wishes, which waited only for an opportunity to break into action; and that these sins are evidences of a heart at enmity with God—a heart whose depths of wiliness and depravity even we ourselves do not know. God has seen, has known all—enough to sink us down into the pit of corruption. But His message is, "I, Love, think no evil against you; I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord,— thoughts of peace, and not of evil;" "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "If you cannot believe, no power can save you—you are lost. Fasten these words on your memory. If your conscience is racked by memory of past sins, if your heart seems especially hard, are you excluded from pardon by these words? Jesus is ready to save you from God's intolerable curse—to save you immediately. If you can say, 'I do believe,' then you can say, 'I am saved; I know the Lord's too true to break His word—too good to deceive; He's said it, that's enough.' 'He that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life,'—not shall have, when faith hath borne fruit. Do you believe?—then necessarily at once you have this

gift, because no other condition is imposed. If you cannot believe, woe! woe! Don't lose so precious a blessing —don't go without exercising faith. If Jesus has said, 'Believe,' He means it. Welcome this mighty, loving Saviour, who will not only forgive, but waits to receive you as a brother. Give up on the spot to Him all remnants of past sin; take Him at His word; take Him as your own Redeemer."[1]

God's people "shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand." "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Now, turning to our last point, let us try to realise how our Master and Example desires to see the same love to the creature fulfilled in us. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" now, "no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it and cherisheth it;" so should we act towards our fellow-men, "for we are members one of another." Love lays hold on the bright parts of character; God knew the faithlessness at times which made Abraham stoop to duplicity, yet He loved him as His "friend." He saw the selfishness, and cruelty, and lust yet in David's heart; still, inspired words have left on record, that he was the man after His own heart. Peter denied Him, yet the Lord specially committed His people to His care. And John, with yet lurking ambition, desired a place next Him in glory, yet we read He was the disciple whom Jesus pre-eminently loved. The natural impulse of love is to make excuses for faults in

[1] Rev. B. Noel.

the beloved, unless, as is very common, its passion blinds. When friendship's eye is open to defects, how the heart rather dwells on the hope of their being wholly overcome in time, or deems them outshone by other graces! Even if allowing to itself that there are defects, how jealously does love keep the unwilling conviction to itself! how does it rebel against notice of them by others' lips! Those who best know themselves are the most lenient judges of others. Realising that they have a daily battle to fight, a life-long work in removing the beam out of their own eye, they have less time, less heart, for condemning others. Convinced of their own fearful leprosy, they cannot cast stones at others.

One good resulting from the times of persecution was that it drew closely together all those who loved one common Master, making them esteem one another in love, in honour preferring one another. They were contented so long as they felt each other to be holding the Head; union they knew to be strength; and the Lord's people being few in number, compared to the hosts arrayed against them, they could ill afford to war amongst themselves; consequently, mere denominational differences did not cause dissensions. Would that we realised more sympathisingly, that others are compassed with infirmities, even as we are, and are prone to be deceived and misguided, even when striving after what is right! Now that true religion is considered respectable, and is spoken well of, men are apt to lose its true spirit amidst its fashionable work and talk. How often is jealousy frightfully apparent in believers! How common is it to hear scandal even from their lips! How unsparingly do they often indulge in hard criticisms of each other! How irritated and indignant are they often against, not

only the sins, but the infirmities of all men! Keen in the scent of sin—this is not the manner in which Jesus marked His displeasure against evil. He was "grieved" over it—He "wept" for sinners. We read of His warning His disciples of the sins of classes, but His tongue never indulged in invectives against individuals; when He condemned such, He spoke *to* them, and not *of* them; and what He said was not the personally offended reproach, uttered on the momentary spur of aggravated feeling, but the loving, wise, faithful rebuke, spoken for their good. True love will not attribute bad motives to others; or where knowledge compels painful opinions, love will not dwell on the evil, but will pray that it may be rooted out, and that fruits of the Spirit may be implanted in the stead thereof. Love has often a hard battle to fight, for many delight in provoking God's children, glory in their falls, and make no effort to avoid paining them. Alas! these roots of hatred find place not only in the hearts of worldlings, but even in those of believers. Perfect love thinketh no evil, but believers' love is yet imperfect; and whilst some, reared in hotbeds of holiness and pure affection, have scarcely had their spiritual love tried, others are continually exposed to the chilling influences of uncongenial spirits, or circumstances have peculiarly tried their love, and these know how difficult to attain to is the standard, "Charity thinketh no evil." How dear to the child of God, wearied, and ofttimes disheartened, by a sense of His own sin, and the sins and infirmities of others, must ever be the remembrance that here the Lord is preparing His people, as in a school, for Home, and there they shall be perfect, all and each,—each then shall faithfully reflect back His perfection, though each with a distinctive character! It

is not wise, it is not just, to compare every man's opinions with our own; in some points we may realise an eternal truth strongly, and be convinced that belief in it is necessary to salvation; where it is so, love will unweariedly strive to persuade, but never is it for us to condemn; even when our message is spurned, love will pity, and pray, and strive the more. Few such points are there, however; and even in the reception of these, the manner of acceptance, and effect of belief, differ greatly. Let us just remember this, that whilst the command is to live in the world, and bless it by a holy, unselfish, zealous walk, we are yet forbidden to judge, and, knowing our own guiltiness, should surely have pity on our fellow-servants. Sometimes men act according to the light of a mistaken truth and conscience, still they deserve respect. "Woe to the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" Love, from its very nature, is essentially unselfish; it works constantly for the beloved; and, dear reader! if we are following in the steps of Jesus Christ, we are struggling to put away self, and live for others; if it is so, then anything we can do for them will be hailed gladly; maybe our love and self-sacrifice will be thanklessly rejected, or proudly received as a right; but here what comfort is there for us servants of God in the words, "Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord;" and, again, in the remembrance of how Jesus was treated by those whom He came to save; how He worked, and with how little

apparent fruit. Surely this must be a helpful thought to those who are oppressed with the fear that the *little* evidence given them of the fruitfulness of their labours is a token of their sin or infirmity having hindered the work of God in the souls they have sought after! True, the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified; still, all then had the same power as now, to choose whom they would serve; and we know there was that holy authority and markedness of bearing about Jesus which drew learned and unlearned to Him, and induced some to give up everything for His sake, poor and despised as He was in the world's balance. Men reviled Him, even for His labours of love; but, nevertheless, He lived and died for them. He knew their wickedness, but Love thought no evil against them. So with His apostle Paul; for very envy, and desire to anger him, some preached the Gospel, and he rejoiced; all his desire was to have his Master glorified, and souls saved. Again, turning to later times, we see the same principle carried out in believers—love excelling towards persecutors.

Amongst the many martyrs of Mary's reign was Rowland Taylor. Condemned to be burnt at the stake, simply for having taught his people the truth out of God's word, he was brought, on the 6th of February, 1555, to Aldenham Common, Hadleigh. Amongst the many present to witness his death was one Joyce, an "evil and malignant" fellow. Wishing to return good for evil, Taylor called him, and said, "Joyce, I pray thee come and pull off my boots, and take them." A butcher, named Dunningham, was called to place the faggots and kindle the pile, but he refused, in spite of the threats of imprisonment held out over him. Joyce, unsoftened by the martyr's gentleness, came forward to act executioner,

and one of those who helped him savagely cast a faggot in the sufferer's face, so that the blood flowed fast from the wound. "O friend, I have harm enough! what needed that?" was the only remonstrance it elicited. Patience had her perfect work.[1]

Love thinketh no evil of any, because it identifies them with itself. Thence it is that those who love Jesus need no long time to make them love men, specially those who are of the household of faith: their one dear Saviour is the uniting bond between these last; for His sake they cherish, help, bear with, and speak good of, each other. And their love, like His, goes out to those who are not yet of His flock; remembering the rock whence they were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence they were digged, they have a fellow-feeling with those who are still captives of Satan. For, and of, all men love has a kindly word; and when, in truth, it cannot praise, at least silence hides faults. May this pure love reign in our hearts, dear reader! then shall its manifestation be Godlike.

[1] England's Daybreak.

CHAPTER X.

" Oh, Saviour! may we never rest
Till Thou art formed within;
Till Thou hast calmed our troubled breast,
And crushed the power of sin.

Oh! may we gaze upon Thy cross,
Until the wondrous sight
Makes earthly treasures seem but dross,
And earthly sorrows light;

Until, released from carnal ties,
Our spirit upward springs,
And sees true peace above the skies,
True joy in heavenly things.

There, as we gaze, may we become
United, Lord, to Thee,
And, in a fairer, happier home,
Thy perfect beauty see."

BATHURST.

CHARITY REJOICETH NOT IN INIQUITY.

God hates Sin, though the exercise of Free-will necessitates its Temporary Permission—Nature loves Evil—Hatred—Idolatry—Lying—Foolish Talking—The World gleans from Love's Spirit and Actions—Charley Rogers—Need of studying the Picture of Natural Depravity—The Recipient of Heavenly Love seeks to be purified inwardly—Besetting Sins—Comfort in Self-crucifixion—The Believer welcomes all Effective Discipline—Richard Baxter—George the Coachman—Love reproves Sin in Others—Henry Martyn—Mr. Thomason—Samuel the Soldier—Abby Bolton—Danger to Correctors—Solemnity of added Responsibilities—Wilberforce—Legh Richmond—Effect of a Tear—Look Within, and look Forward.

THE doctrines of election and free-will have in all ages proved a stumbling-block to many Christians; whilst to the unconverted they have been a handle for blasphemy and reproaching God. If, it is argued, He hath mercy only on a few, and whom He will He hardeneth, why doth He yet find fault? "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Is it not lawful for Him to do what He will with His own? The origin of evil is a theme beyond the reach of man's intellect; it is one of the hidden things belonging to the Almighty; it suffices for us to know that God created everything good, and that it was man's own choice to trust Satan rather than His maker, to know rather than be ignorant of evil. God, in His own being, is intrinsically holy, and therefore He cannot look on sin; the objects defiled by it are banished His presence. Thus the angels

which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, "He hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." How deeply He detests it is made known in the price it cost Him to redeem sinners; "no man may deliver his brother, nor make agreement unto God for him, for it cost more to redeem their souls, so that he must let that alone for ever." Yes, truly, no corruptible things were the payment given for fallen man, but the precious blood of God's own Son. Holiness had written death over the breach of the law, and required its fulfilment to the letter, and love, in desiring not the death of a sinner, could not thwart justice; therefore, in the cross of Emanuel, mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other. That cross speaks of the Lord's intense hatred of sin, and of His equally intense love for the sinner. "Hear now," it says, "O house of Israel, is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? and not that he should return from his ways, and live? I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." Henceforth no man dare say "when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man."

But if the Lord our God is thus holy, it is, alas! equally true that men are unholy by nature and by practice. The same Scriptures which proclaim the one affirm the other, with startling, authoritative emphasis, with sweeping unreserve, adding that men love and glory in their sinfulness. Thus we read that he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool, because the end of the way which seemeth right unto him are the ways of death; that he rejoices

to do evil, loves simplicity, delights in scorning, hates knowledge; that his works are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, covetousness, foolish talking, jesting, inordinate affection, evil devisings, tale-bearing, lying, stealing, mockings, cruelties, boastings, disobedience to lawful authority, slanderings; that he is unthankful, a lover of pleasure, unholy, having no hope, and without God in the world. Such is the frightful picture drawn of man in his natural estate by the unerring finger of God; his whole head is sick, and his whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores; his iniquities are more than the hairs of his head. Well may each exclaim, with David, "Who can understand his errors?" and with Job, "I abhor myself!" Through self-ignorance, many there are, however, who repudiate this category, as not true of each individual; to such Scripture says, "As in water, face answereth to face; so the heart of man to man." Essentially all are alike, though education and circumstances variously regulate the development of the seed; sacred and profane history, and individual experience, set their seal of confirmation to the declaration of God's word.

Thus, as regards "hatred, strife." How from generation to generation have wars desolated the earth! How has the earliest recorded engagement, the battle of Siddim, in which nine kings and their people took part, been followed by long campaigns and bloody engagements! Whence the fame of Cyrus and Titus, of Cæsar and Hannibal, of Napoleon and Wellington? Time has not yet softened the harrowing memories of Crimean losses

and Indian sufferings; whilst already another war is on our hands with a people proverbial for their ingenuity and excessive delight in torture; and a whole continent is torn with the convulsive struggles and fervid hate, not of stranger nations, but, more sickening still, of brothers and fellow-countrymen!

Nor have wars sufficed as vent for hatred; Cain, Lamech, David, Hazael, have had their successors in every century; assassins stalking about with stealthy tread, actuated now by the wild passions of a blinding fanaticism, now by the madness of political animosity, now by fancied or real private wrongs. The hidden tortures of the Inquisition,—the bloody reigns of Mary and Charles IX.,—the gladiatorial shows of Vespasian and Nero, when the arena was thronged with spectators,—the deeply-laid conspiracies and foully-executed murders of banded Irishmen, with open menaces,—the subtle administration of poison, and death-stabs without warning, of Englishmen, now-a-days; these, with their innumerable fellow-horrors, all testify that hatred is bound up in man's nature.

And though many deem themselves unchargeable with blood-guiltiness, who has not in spirit committed the same? It is envy, hard names, angry words, bitter thoughts, which *first* stain the murderer, for no one becomes a finished reprobate at one bound; and who can affirm that he has been pure all his life from these? Who but must confess that, when irritated, he has answered sharp on the spur of the moment, sometimes with studied bitterness, meant to cut into the quick?

Again, as regards "idolatry." To worship something seems an impulse implanted in almost every breast. Turning to nations where no revelation had been made known, we find them bowing to the host of heaven, to rivers, to

creeping things, to idols made by their own hands; whilst civilised countries, penetrated by the Gospel news, have turned from the simple faith preached, to worshipping of saints, and images, and pictures. Besides such religious idolatry is another kind, not less enthralling and deadly, whilst even more inexcusable; it is the worship of money, of pleasure, of the creature, of self. Who, on faithful self-examination, but must own to having bowed to one of these idols? Who, on testing the current of his thoughts, the subjects of his deepest interest, the principle of his life, the object of his hope, but must find them criminate him? It is written, "The love of money is the root of all evil;" and truly its devotees are fearfully bound; planning by night, and working by day, they know no rest; all is sacrificed to gain it, even honesty, truthfulness, and the immortal soul; thus merchandise in sin personally is made, and profit drawn through like traffic of others; deceitful weights and divers measures, simony, and false representations, dragging them down to the gambler's table and irretrievable ruin. It is written also, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." Truly the world is very lovely; God hath made everything beautiful, granting man manifold innocent enjoyments. Yet how few look up through nature unto nature's God; how many, instead of using lawful pleasures as occasional recreation, give themselves wholly up to vanity, not confining themselves even to pure sights and sounds! how many give themselves to an unceasing round of frivolity and fashionable worldliness! Again, it is written, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." How many broken, how many bleeding, how many trem-

bling, how many happy hearts, breathe idolatry of the creature! The purest remnant of Eden's bloom, the loveliest attribute of fallen man — love of fellow-mortals is an exquisitely fair plant to look on — a lent gift from heaven; but love is sin, if the throne of the affections is yielded to any other than God: the wife of his bosom, the friend which is as his own soul, must be second to man's Maker. Alas! creature-worship entangles almost every heart! Insensibly life becomes bound with another's; spell-bound, it gazes and adores; that other's notice and affection become its food — the meter of its opinions, wishes, and thoughts. Once more it is written, that all by nature have their "conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind." Self is the easiest god to serve, the one most universally worshipped; its requirements are pleasing to flesh and blood; spontaneously its devices and desires are followed. All must acknowledge this; thought dwells most on its own past, present, and future; its own I wills; its own dislikes — all seek their own. Who, then, can say he is no idolater — that he has never worshipped any other god than the Lord of hosts? who, uncondemned himself, can exalt himself above the heathen?

So as to "lying." Though most men fiercely, and as they believe truthfully, deny participation in this sin, yet it is almost universal; they who would scorn an open lie lend themselves to subterfuge and evasion. Business and fashion are made a cloak for untruthfulness, even amongst those who boast of their morality. The over-charge of the seller, the underrating of the buyer, are covered by pretended justice: "It is naught, it is naught," say they; but, "when they are gone their way, then they boast." How often is the simple customer taken in with a false

description of the merchandise! How, too, do the "not at homes" of society, the pretended joy in welcoming guests who are not liked, not wanted, outwardly bespeak the evil root within! How common the exaggeration of facts, the utterance of scandal, the keeping back a part of the truth, which would alter the whole colouring of the picture!

> "Oh! what a tangled mess we weave,
> When first we practise to deceive;"

for one lie requires many others to maintain it.

Thus, too, with "foolish talking." To the conversation of how few could like honourable testimony be given as that offered to our beloved and sadly-mourned-for Prince Albert, by one who knew him well: "All the words I ever heard fall from his lips were of wisdom and kindness;"[1] yet he doubtless felt often self-condemned on this head. How trifling are the themes of converse generally! how much of evil do they express, forgotten often as soon as uttered! how would we shame to see any kept record of them, even at the end of one day! Truly the tongue, though a little member, is a world of iniquity; set on fire of hell, the mischief it does is unspeakable, often irreparable. To hear themselves speak, many are indifferent as to their subject-matter; crimes, infirmities, frivolities, news of any kind, they greedily embrace, heedless of the impression they make, eager only to bring themselves forward, or excite interest. Thus Solomon says, "a fool's mouth is his destruction," for he "uttereth all his mind," and "in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin."

A like examination into the remaining points of the picture is, alas! all we need, reader, to prove that we

[1] Lord Shaftesbury.

have broken every law,—that the seed of every sin is implanted in our nature. Outward evidences, alas! too early show themselves of this truth; "foolishness is bound in the heart of a child," he is "estranged from the womb;" that which is born of the flesh, therefore, is under condemnation. Inheriting a sinful nature, man is inclined to evil; he loves darkness, and uses life only to minister to his corrupt flesh; yet, ere turning to the contrary nature of heavenly love, let us learn the Bible explanation of the many lovely traits we yet see often, in those who do not profess to have put on Christ.

When God makes an individual, He breathes into him a life which can never be extinguished; another gift also He adds to each human being—*conscience;* which is God's candle in the soul. Since He can only give good gifts, it follows that life and conscience are meant as blessings; but, inasmuch as sin defiles every soul born into this world, the first becomes often a curse, man yielding himself as Satan's tool: the latter, too, becomes defiled, Satan trying to deceive its judgment, and corrupt its tastes. But this last is no easy work, for God's Spirit testifies to the conscience, even where revelation is not given; through the inward monitor "things that are made" speak to man of the eternal Jehovah, and of His will. Hence it is that in all men there is something of good; hence what are looked on as *natural* excellences—sweetness of disposition, love of the beautiful, integrity of mind, philanthropy, patriotism, self-sacrifices. These, though unacknowledged as such by the worldling, are heaven-received gifts, not nature's production. It *may* be that, where only this candle within is given, men shall be judged only by the use they make of it; but to those who have the further light of revela-

tion, these natural graces are but a snare, if they rest in them. Deeply stained with sin and imperfection each trait of character must ever be, and were it possible to present any pure action, it would not be acceptable in the Father's sight *alone*—the blood on it only can make it pleasing to Him.*

Painful and humbling as this picture has been, and individually condemned by it as we stand, yet, reader, let us not turn hurriedly from it. If, without the law, we were once alive, is not our continued little knowledge and study of it one great cause of our being yet so little awed by our unlikeness to God, so little eaten up of earnest zeal in attaining to His likeness? God grant us grace to bear the self-condemnation and aching of heart necessitated by a prayerful, constant study of the description of man in his natural estate, and, in humble faith, to apprehend in Jesus the Saviour exactly suited to our need!

Charley Rogers was a Sunday-school scholar; his teacher, a pious man, used to take deep interest in the members of his class, calling often at their homes, and striving in all his teachings to influence the hearts, as well as store the memories, of his little ones. Charley was the eldest son of a respectable mechanic, at the time about to be spoken of, seven years old. The members of his family, which included two old grandparents, were proud of their religion and morality; never were their seats vacant in the parish church, and appearances were kept in strict accordance with their profession. But they were of the number of those who, confessing themselves in the public services "miserable sinners," yet deem themselves worthy, and plainly made known to others what they felt. In vain had both minister and other Christians endeavoured often to shake

their self-righteous confidence; it seemed as if there were now no hope of convincing them, for Bible truths had been so familiar from childhood, and in them and church ordinances interest was always taken with apparently real sincerity.

It happened one Sabbath that the lesson appointed for the following Lord's day was on the Bible description of the natural heart; each child was to collect all the texts bearing on it. Charley's lesson was generally prepared by the old man, and this week's study afforded special need for his help. As the varied names of sins were gathered, Charley sought to know the meaning of each: with great delight both imagined, when the list was finished on the Saturday evening, that there were only three or four of which *they* were guilty, and these a merciful God, old Rogers said, would not mark against those who perfectly kept the other commands.

The next day the boy returned from morning school and church, very grave and thoughtful: on being asked the cause he replied, "I'll tell you by and bye, grandfather." Accordingly, after tea, he told how teacher had been explaining to them the double meaning of each command, how that the "heart *might mean* what one didn't *do*, because God's Spirit or pride *kept* one from it," and also how that breaking one command must cause eternal death, unless men came to God, and got His forgiveness, for His dear Son's sake. Proudly the old man, his wife, and children denied all this, and tried to argue a different result from the Bible words; however, Charley's heart was full, and he did not like the comfort which would make him independent of his newly-heard-of Friend. For some days, harassed-looking and unhappy, he attended school as usual, and in the evening sought a

few words with his kind teacher: his leisure was spent in some corner either of the house or garden; and at night his parents often heard him praying, "O God, make me know what my heart is like: O God, it seems like as if I can't find out how I have done all those great sins; but, O God, I've been very naughty often, I know; O God, do wash me,—Jesus said He loved little children." It was not long ere his teacher had to rejoice over him as a lamb of the Saviour's flock; not long before Charley realised the defilement of his spirit, the unsanctified motives of all his actions. Very, very dear was this first fruit of his labours to the young clerk who worked for the salvation of sinners his only leisure day. Now did Charley begin a home mission-work out of the fulness of his heart; to get all to honour his own dear Lord Jesus, by learning and confessing truly their own sinfulness, this was his hearty aim: the Sabbath lesson which had been the means of first rousing him from indolent ease of heart was carefully copied and carried in his pocket. When impatient, idle, or in any evil mood, a look at it would suffice to put sin away; and when vexed with the angry arguments of his relatives, with whom he often pleaded to come to Jesus, the paper reminded him that he had not always loved Jesus, and that still sin was in him, as in them.

Months thus rolled away, till a fever seized Charley, and in a few days it became apparent that he was passing from earth. When the doctor's opinion was made known to the old man, he would not leave the sick bed, but, stooping over the delirious sufferer, again and again entreated him to tell again the truths which had been the only cause of his ever receiving a cross word. Bitterly weeping, the little family gathered round, watching for

the return of consciousness, before the lamp of life went out. When Charley sank into an exhausted sleep, his grandfather knelt beside him, praying once more to hear his lamb's voice; and on the child's awakening, burst forth, "Oh! Charley, Charley, how can I get to feel my sins? I must be worse than you, but I can't feel them. Oh, Charley, I've hardened my heart, and now I can't soften it! Oh, Charley, pray for your poor grandfather! Tell me how you got to feel your sins." And the dying child brightened up, and pointing to his paper on the wall, gave it to the old man, telling him to go and listen to teacher's explanation of it, and then, "all alone, ask God, over and over again," to show him how his heart was "bad as the Bible said," and how he "dreadfully needed" forgiveness through the blood. Charley went home, but he was never forgotten; the old man sought the teacher, and was gratified by his following the remains of the favourite pupil to their last resting-place; and on the little mound might both be seen many an evening during that summer, the one with the slip of paper, the other with his Bible, both earnestly seeking a deeper acquaintance with their own hearts, a more grateful love for the Saviour who had washed them, a more dependent, constant lean on the Spirit for sanctification; for this other soul was likewise given to the young man, and Charley's paper was again used as a daily staff.

If the contemplation of this Bible description of the natural man was thus the means of eternal salvation to these two, when they were strangers to Christ, how much more, believing reader, shall the same means be blessed to His people! how much more shall the Holy Spirit breathe of His own teaching into the spirits of those who know the way of access! The natural man

rejoices in iniquity; hence it behoves us to mistrust our every thought, and wish, and action; to jealously and continually test ourselves by the revealed will of God. Let our prayer be oftener raised for a true insight into our motives, into the whole state of our inner man; that Satan may never be allowed to make us deceive ourselves; but that, with sincerity, we may confess and loathe our sinfulness, and unceasingly struggle to attain the spirit and character of our Holy God.

And now, having looked into nature's feeling with regard to sin, let us turn to those entertained by the soul which has been born again, and, baptized by the spirit of love, now increasingly is attaining the tastes of its Divine Inspirer.

Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity. When the Holy Ghost has convinced of sin, and shown Jesus to the mourner over iniquity, He leads him on to search out the hidden depths within, to pull out the mote out of his own eye. At first, though his sorrow for the past is real, and his desire henceforth to be holy sincere, the sense of personal hatred to evil will be comparatively small. Though the spirit is now willing, habit has deadened its keen sensibility to the touch of unhallowed things, and it is only by real *study* of God, and fervent prayer for help, that His character of purity can be imbibed.

Dear fellow-sinner! fain would I plead with you to take up, as I, too, long indeed to do, this subject, with no half-heartedness, but with your whole soul. If, in truth, our body has become a living temple, habited by God, let us really make it our chief work to guard His throne within from all treasonable harbouring of His enemy. Truly, the sad contrariety to His known will betrayed by the record of our heart and lip should cause us deep

anxiety; plain is the command, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins;" "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing;" yet how little are Christians now a peculiar people, marked by their holiness! how freely do we often indulge self, and give way, in spirit and letter, to those things which are abominable in the sight of our Master! how are we generally set upon fulfilling *our* daily vocation or round of pleasures, instead of, as faithful servants, first doing our Lord's service! Herein are we verily guilty, even when we set ourselves to do or bear His work, and to commune with Him; now the motive is wrong, now we are self-satisfied; only in part are we constrained by His love, only for a time are we spiritually entranced; how soon the body, and natural defilement of spirit, drag down the soul; and creature worship, mammon's thrall, gain of lucre, worldly allurements or troubles, with other fleshly charms, weaken the feeble life within, well-nigh extinguish the flickering light, and make the heirs of heaven walk almost as votaries of Satan! But so would it not be had we His perfect love, for affection shuns all that pains its beloved, and intuitively learns and follows, nay, more, itself reciprocates naturally, his wishes and pleasure. Love is the consequence of something seen or heard of; knowledge in some measure is needful to its entertainment; hence, if we would love Jehovah more, we must know Him more; and as His stainless purity, His innate hatred of all that is sensual, devilish, and selfish, becomes more fully revealed, we must struggle on to feel the same, to put from us with disgust all that we see at variance with His will, to rise above the grovelling thoughts and earthly aspirations which once bounded our

delights, and in Him, His glory, and His work, find real and heartfelt themes of devoted interest.

Our only road to attain holiness is by the Spirit alone made clear, and in His strength alone can we pursue it; the way is narrow and thorny, the ascent steep and wearisome; nature thwarts grace at every step; each inch of ground will be disputed. Oh! let us pray for the softening dews of love to melt our stubborn, earthly wills, to subdue the lusts of the flesh, and build up the implanted nature of Him who died for us.

Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity. Each mortal, having his peculiar idiosyncrasies, will through life retain the same. If, on conversion, he finds them contrary to the Spirit of Christ, more especially will he aim at uprooting *them*, or bringing *them* so under the control of the Holy Spirit, that *they* shall add to the lustre of his Christian walk, and thereby redound to His Master's glory: setting a mark against *these*, amongst the detailed traits of the natural man, whilst striving to be altogether dead with Christ and holy, *they* will obtain his most watchful care. Dear reader! have you found out the sin which doth most easily beset you? Are you laying aside every weight? Are you striving to second the efforts of the Spirit within? To conquer all *feelings* of irritation, pride, deceit, temper? This must be the chief aim of life —to have the heart purified, the root of evil expunged. Into your inner man no eye can see, save His who shall judge you; you may deceive man therefore, but, oh! what use is there in so doing, when he must die, or, at least, be judged as you; and his opinion cannot affect your state before God? He is not as man, who listens to slanders; He cannot be unjust; as a man soweth, so shall he reap. Even Satan calumniates in vain. God Him-

self watches the race—the battle; He Himself adjudicates the reward.

Beyond this inner new life, charity openly proves its hatred to sin. The believer, whilst he tries to do away with hidden iniquity, also strives to put away outward sins. Are you so doing, reader? Is it that by nature your affections are keenly alive? that your thoughts, wishes, and cares centre in relatives and bosom friends? that, from morn till night, you are busied with home and social ties, and that you know no want save their responsive love and their happiness? And are you now, with as true love to them, yet loving Jesus best, and seeking rather to serve them for Him than for themselves? Are you living with them as with those who must shortly appear in the presence of God? There may be as much idolatry in quiet home life, as when the treasures of the heart are lavished on the gayer world; is this last case rather yours, reader, naturally? If so, have you torn the idol from the throne, and are you now loving him subserviently to your King?

Or, again, is your temper irritative, high, or overbearing? Does a little thing offend? do you revolt from being found fault with? or do you delight to interfere with others? Do those who know you best feel your public works and words of teaching weakened by your constant vent to temper, your impatience with fellow-sinners, your unloving habit of rebuking harshly all you see wrong (in your own opinion) in others? And are you now calming the frenzied spirit? restraining the angry word? are you now abstaining from the work of a busybody?

Or are you naturally deceitful? Does timidity urge you on to a word of denial? Do you cloak your unseemly

actions? When you see a prospect of gain thereby, do you make merchandise through another's sin or simplicity, whilst you conceal your advantage, or pretend it has been justly gained? And are you now wrestling against the temptation? are you confessing the truth, and striving to be honest in all your actions?

It would be impossible, as was said before, to follow out the appropriation of every sin, with the object of detecting whether it is yet flung away or being subdued. Only let us make this a matter for closet study; remembering that if we would enter heaven, we must now put out of us iniquity, even to the plucking out a right eye, or cutting off a right hand; and that, if we would be a blessing to others, we must afford them visual and oral evidence of the sanctifying effects of religion in us; we must give up even that in which personally we feel no harm, in which we can lawfully engage, if it is a stumbling-block to others.

True, the effort needed is very great, the sacrifice required sometimes a part of one's life, as it were; true, all our time below must be spared from self; true, oft-times weary and dispirited, we shall have to mourn our backslidings, and little or no sense of godly attainment; but there is precious comfort for all who yield themselves, soul and body, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, unto God. "Blessed are ye that mourn, for ye shall be comforted." Yes, reader, if thou art such an one, in God's name I bear you cheering consolation: He feels for you; He knows your frame; He remembers you are dust; He is aware of your native affinity to unholiness, and of your consequent liability to fall unawares; He will forgive, even when knowingly you have yielded to His enemy, if again you will acknowledge your transgressions, and

fight under His banner; He is conscious of each sacrifice you offer Him, albeit unknown to your fellow-man—of each effort you make to please Him, of each restraint upon evil feelings. And, oh! is not the winning of His smile of approval worth any present self-denial or cost? His promise is, "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, and in the world to come eternal life." And thus, too, with conquests over self; the purged ones shall have fulness of joy for evermore, glory, and everlasting salvation. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." "I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out."

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God;" for "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." Let the discipline needful to the attainment of perfect holiness and real hatred for sin be what it may, surely it will be welcome. If "no cross, no crown," gladly will be received the blessed trials (mercies, gifts, hid in disguise) which are to fit for the heavenly mansions. If the flesh is universally inimical to purity—if naturally sin is the spontaneous production of the heart—reason shows that the master which brings to Christ must needs be severe, since at every step his education

thwarts the will, and crosses the grain of his pupil. But if, indeed, we have counted the cost, and resolved to give up all, if that we may apprehend that for which also we are apprehended of Christ Jesus, then passively we shall submit ourselves to His training, and recognise love in the hand that smites, the voice that corrects, in the power that subdues and sanctifies, us.

Richard Baxter, the well-known author and preacher, was ever subject to bodily weakness and disease. Commenting once on the case of the pool of Bethesda, he said, "Oh, *my* God! I *thank* Thee for the like discipline of fifty-eight years. How safe a life this is, in comparison with full prosperity and pleasure!"

George —— was coachman in the family of a rich English gentleman, in whose family his wife and children also found employment. Two only of his sons lived away from him, one being a sailor, the other a soldier. The child of pious parents, George had been brought up in the fear and love of God, though only in appearance did he serve Him. A man of warm affections, he cared for little beyond his domestic circle. Here was the altar at which he worshipped; in his wife and children the gods to whom he consecrated his days. His parents died, not having received the promise, but believing that their prayers and example would be—nay, had been—answered. It happened that many Christians lived in the town, known to George from childhood; for such it had been his parents' delight to find out and hold communion with. Belonging to the Wesleyan body also, he came still much in contact with such at classes, &c. These, and the succeeding officiating ministers, strove, from time to time, to win him to be a real servant of God; but in vain. His loved and loving family were

very dear to him, and to work for them, and enjoy their society, was all his pleasure. The first trouble that entered the happy home was the death of his eldest child—a beloved daughter. Then, though not by him, was comfort found by the mourning family through the ministrations of a member of their church, the affianced bride of their absent soldier lad, whose heart had, some few months previously, been won for Christ. Gently she pointed to them the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, as One who was afflicted in their grief, but, being the Resurrection and the Life, would soon dry away their tears, if they would look on Him as the Lamb of God, slain to take away their sins. George would not be comforted, and fixed his love all the more intensely on those still left him. Therefore again did a loving God gather unto Himself another of the idols. The wife was taken; deep was her joy, for she knew her hope was surely anchored, and she loved Jesus "far best." Her children sorrowed not as those without hope; they knew she was but gone first, and the little while yet lent them was precious. The widower was crushed, but not subdued. Hard thoughts and bitter filled his soul against the Author of his misery. Winter came, with its tempestuous gales. Anxiously was awaited the absent sailor's return. The Christmas log was on the fire; the room and the welcome were ready for the mariner who was never to return. Short, but kindly, was the official notice that his bark had sunk within sight of land, and he and all the hands had perished. Could it be true? Hope wrestled against despair, and for weeks they almost expected to hear the well-known voice—to see the manly form. This fresh bereavement hastened on the hereditary disease which had attacked the only

son at home; slowly he faded as a flower, leaving the mourners his undoubted assurance that the Master was calling him to wait on Him in His own house. Time passed on; the old town, dear by its memories of the past, its sacred treasures now hid in the dust, was still clung to; the soldier had passed through unscathed the rough changes of war and climate, uninjured in health or limb; he had returned from the Crimea; but the fickle climate of his island home fostered the seeds of inherited disease, and the appointment of his regiment to fresh service in the East was deemed a favourable chance for the preservation of his life. Thus, again, George and his two remaining daughters were left alone; he had left service, and entered business on his own account: to give them every comfort, to make their lives sunny as might be, with broken health and a sundered circle, was his dear desire; and, tracing with instinctive perception the wonted symptoms, now too well learnt by heart, seeing in both girls the premonitory fading, daring not to deceive himself by the radiant eye, and blooming cheek, and delicately transparent skin, to make money began increasingly to be the ambition of his heart. Night, as well as day, would he have laboured, on Sabbath as well as week-days, but the holy hatred of profiting by sin, the fervent desire to gain as much as possible of their father's company whilst they were left, that they might speak to him of his soul and eternity, made his daughters check lovingly, but firmly, all outward disregard of God's commands. Still, not satisfied with the sufficiency he obtained for them, through others he gambled and won; he made others work for him on God's day, and great profits accrued to him. His sin seemed to prosper him, and, emboldened in the course of evil, he now hesitated

not to allay all anxious questioning of his children, by false statements. But money, though it secured medical attendance, and all the comforts that can soften the sufferer's anguish, and ease the couch of pain, could not stay the destroyer's hand; death claimed both beloved ones, and George was left alone in his native land, with no comfort in his mourning, and the memory of early profession, after indifference, and latter years' rebellion, to the commands of a great and holy God.

Selling all he had, he volunteered for his son's regiment, and set sail for India. God had so ordered that the same vessel should convey the sweet-minded Alice to her husband; and it was during the stillness of the long sea-voyage that, through her instrumentality, the idolater of so many years was brought to yield his bleeding heart to Him who had so long asked it in vain. He who so lately would not be comforted now recognised the goodness which had left him lonely on earth, and thankfulness predominated over grief. Earnestly employing his leisure time in searching the truth as revealed in the Gospel, he determined to prove his transference of *supreme* love to the Lord by, as far as in him laid, undoing the effects of his idolatry in trafficking by the sin of others. By active and steady attendance to regular duty, and willing services rendered to all he could on board, he won the favour of several, who slightly remunerated him, on his arrival in Calcutta, for his obliging behaviour. These trifles, together with what money he had obtained from the sale, he sent directly back to those whom he had overreached, with letters detailing his change of heart, and his entreaties that they, too, would come to the blood which alone can cleanse from sin. His health did not long stand the climate; a few months he lived with his only

remaining children; just time enough to see his first grandchild, and then he was invalided home. And what was his feeling on returning alone to the deserted house—the old town? "Never in my best old days was I so happy as I am now. I have an *eternal certainty* of *possession* I never had then, for *now* death *only* divides me and those I love, and that river must soon be crossed, and then for ever and for ever we shall be together. *Then* I felt I had them only for a time. You may think, then, that my heart dances with joy, and I can only *thank* God for all the trouble He took with His ungrateful, wicked child; dealing by me *so gently, too,*—taking my dear wife and children *one by one,* that I might not be altogether overdone, but giving me time to rise and be in part healed after each blow. I might have died, or gone mad, otherwise, but He only wanted my good." In another letter he said, "I often think, as I sit on the grave, that likely enough, if I had taken the first hint God gave me, I might now have my family still round me. The thought makes my heart ache much; but then I remember where they are now, and I can only thank God, who has made them earlier rejoice with Him through my hardness." To an old friend, who came to condole with him on his present loneliness, he said, "Yes, of course, at every step I miss the voices; I hear them now as plain as day, and think I can see one and another come to meet me; and I couldn't for the life of me be but as a woman, the first time as I went into what was my place; I thought as I could see Sally watering her flowers, and Rina working by her mother; and the old room where they all died,—I say it did unman me. But oh! Jim, I tell you true, I'm still a happy man. I've like got my harvest in safe, and now I've no care, save to be gathered

in too. My others are on the same way, thank God! Yes, thank God, with all my heart! His mercies have been wonderful; my losses have been the biggest of them all, for He like got Himself into bad repute by them."

Seeing thus that the believer learns to hate iniquity in himself, let us now see his estimation of, and conduct regarding, it in others. Of necessity, as his own heart becomes purified and enlightened with heaven-received grace, that which is unholy will become increasingly painful to eye and ear. He will become more and more sensitive to earthliness and un-Christlike traits in those around, and will lovingly desire, for his Saviour's sake, for their sake, and for the gratification of his own new-born tastes, the eradication of all passions and principles contrary to the law and mind of God. Striving himself, by lip and life, to be a living representation of the great Model, he will faithfully, moreover, point out to the doers of sin their guilt,—even to fellow-Christians the points in which they palpably transgress, and thereby do harm to the cause of God, amongst those still unconverted, and the weak brethren of the fold.

Henry Martyn, whose peculiarly loving and sensitive disposition made him naturally shun rebuke, said, "Reproof is a duty of unlimited extent and almost insuperable difficulty; the way to know when to address men, and when to abstain, *is to love;*" yet when he saw aught that savoured of lightly esteeming the commands and charge of God, boldly he ever stood forth, fearlessly condemning the sin. Alike, the trifling fellow-candidates at his own ordination, the blasphemous, godless soldiery, the worldly irreligious of the upper classes, commonly pronounced inaccessible by the clergy, received his faithful admonitions.

Thus, too, with the father of the late Lieut.-governor of North India, Mr. Thomason; when acting as chaplain to the Governor-general, on one of his tours through the country, he openly rebuked the breaking of the Sabbath by the moving of the camp on that as on week-days, and declared his resolution to resign his post rather than sanction by presence and action such disregard of the Divine command.

Samuel B —— had, up to the time of his service in the Crimea, been a dissolute man, given to swearing, and all unholy passions and self-pleasing. Thoughtlessly, as the many, he entered more than one battle, heedless of the eternity on whose brink he stood. A dangerous wound made him for a time an inmate of the hospital; and there it was that, for lack of any excitement, in hopes of allaying extreme *ennui*, he accepted the loan of a Bible. Untaught by man, the sacred volume itself was made by the Spirit to speak with converting power to his soul; sin was revealed to him, in all its fearful consequences, in all its ungrateful return to a dying Lord; and from that time the soldier, in prayerful dependence, heartily strove to put away self, and follow the footprints of Jesus.

He returned to England, and availed himself of the experience and teaching of more experienced believers. Again he was appointed to service, and in Persia and India was amongst the brave who brought honour to the English banner, and safety to the British beleaguered ones. But, whilst thus serving his Queen, he was also known as one of the praying, pious men, and one peculiarly bold in repressing evil. So marked was his condemnation of sin, that many felt awed in his presence; and

when any specially defiant sinner, any peculiarly reckless swearer, shocked even his comrades, Samuel's name was used as a "stopper."

On one occasion a comrade asked him to join a little money with his in order to purchase some things in the bazaar; by uniting the two sums a better purchase would be insured. Samuel gave it, receiving in return about the right value; but, overhearing afterwards some of the men saying that H—— had got the things "dirt-cheap," and must "have stood the black again the wall," whilst he selected and made off with his treasures, he went to him, and threatened to make known the facts to the commanding officer, unless he told him exactly what he had got and the amount paid. So pointedly did his rebuke touch H——, when the latter had confessed his fun in swindling the poor native (who had not dared complain), that he submissively yielded up his unlawful gain, which Samuel bore back to the desponding seller. Some one nice article he chose out and paid for, and gave it to H——, as a token that his correction was the offspring of love, whilst the same love yet hated oppression and sin. That uncommon faithfulness, mingled with as uncommon love, were used of God in leading the wanderer to the fold; and, instead of unkindly feeling, consequent on the reproof, the two soldiers became close friends and fellow-pilgrims Zionwards.

And in a specially devout family in America, whose members outwardly obeyed gospel commands from inward attachment to them, the purified, sensitive soul of Abby Bolton, a beloved and suffering daughter, was grieved one Sabbath during her painful illness by the preparation of some little hot dainty for her dinner: when asked

afterwards whether she had enjoyed it, she replied, "How could I, when I knew it had occasioned trouble on the Sabbath?"

But whilst holiness cannot but mark its disapproval of sin, and the believer is bound faithfully, directly or indirectly, to reprove it, beware, reader, lest in obeying this duty, you be not rather fostering your own pride, and love of interference and rebuke, than acting from the holiness of heart which springs from love. There are some Christians who, by overbearance of self-assumed authority, condemn right and left, with little sense of their own shortcomings, and no self-humbling. Such excite bad feelings in those condemned, and too often the derisive sneer, felt, if not expressed, "Why don't you look at home?" Rather let us see if the same sins be not in us as we see in others, that, while quietly alone telling our brother his fault, we may also make him feel that we do so from no self-pleasing or sense of superiority, but only for his advantage; and never let us reprove, save when we are in a softened mood.

One solemn remembrance might serve as a useful check on rash casting pearls before swine; for many Christians give unlawful offence, and hinder the work they desire thereby to forward, by making it a kind of official duty to force some religious expression on every one they meet. It is written, "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" Surely we, who bear tidings that induce such momentous consequences, should be awed in their declaration, and seek to add the wisdom of the serpent to zeal; surely we should know some fear,

at every delivery of our message, lest the added responsibilities we are laying on him should prove an increasing source of rebellion, and consequent condemnation, to the sinner.

True, God charges His people to tell forth His salvation, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear; but it is, we must remember, *His people* He so charges, and that takes it for a granted necessity that they are men of the spirit and stamp of Him who wept over Jerusalem, who looked with love on the young rich man, who spent nights in praying for a blessing on His mission-work.

There is selfishness in just easing one's own conscience in giving forced utterance to the truth, and remaining satisfied therewith; rather, when we speak, let us try to realise that henceforth our imperative duty is to pray over that seed; for though the increase alone comes of God, man must work with the same untiring zeal and watchful care as if all depended on his own efforts. Does not this thought commend itself to you, reader—that a vivid realisation of the responsibility we lay on every one to whom we speak the Gospel message would place just the right constraint on us, and hinder from uttering aught rashly, promiscuously? Might not such holy awe go far to ensure blessing whenever we speak?

God grant unto us His constant teaching, that we may be kept from blood-guiltiness, either through unfaithful reserve, and unlawful tampering with sin, or unhallowed boldness in bringing forward spiritual themes! Well might the Apostle cry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Who, indeed? since at every step temptation awaits us, and a perverted judgment leads often the

meaner of good to do evil. Thus Wilberforce, with his large-hearted Christian charity, was wont to speak so gently of the errors of Roman Catholics, that his children became followers of their creed. Whilst Legh Richmond, with deep sense of his parental authority and influence, so disgusted his eldest son with religion, that he became an openly godless and dissolute man.

It is not so much the profession, as the felt personal character, that influences. Thus, if sin is sharply rebuked only, there is less likelihood of the sinner's being softened, than if he saw and felt also that the reprover's heart was wrung within him. I remember a Christian soldier once telling me, that all efforts made by his friends to bring him to the love of the truth had been vain, until one evening, as he was stooping over his youngest sister to look at her drawing, he saw a tear drop on her hand; he had hardened himself all the day to the words of his family, but the feeling that his position really affected her happiness broke down his opposition, and won him for Jesus.

The heart is the real instrument which wields the power of influence under God. When its hatred of iniquity is real, fear and jealousy over self will soften and humble the manner of the outer man, and thus personally kept in check, the believer may win any amount of love, which he may reckon as influence also. Were our attainment of such life and walk *high*, of us should the same blessed testimony be given as of our Master — he goeth about "*doing good.*" Consciously and unconsciously would "our life utter speech—our convictions be mirrored in our daily walk."[1]

[1] Rev. Frank Owen.

Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity. Insensibly breathing sin-tainted air within and without, as we were by nature, look to it, beloved fellow-pilgrim, whether you are made alive, your senses quickened, your tastes purified, your appetite satisfied with God's good things! Look to it, whether your whole nature is transformed, your spirit renewed, your very being inwrought with the life of God! Look to it, whether you are crucified with Christ, dead to the world, already a partaker of the resurrection-life, in and through Him! And though, through grace, you may be enabled to trace considerable and blessed progress in the divine life, never look to "*have* attained" on this side eternity; not until the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, and the building of God, an house not made with hands, be put on, may any trust in the purity of their desires and tastes; but in joyful hope of a future eternity of perfection, through the varying discipline of time, ever this one thing do, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, press toward the mark."

God, in mercy, keep us from self-deception, and reveal to us ever our true state! And, oh! may He keep, regulate, and perfect every pulse within, and action without, so that we may be numbered amongst the undefiled, of whom it is written, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb."

CHAPTER XI.

"There is a glorious Name exalted above all,
Which man's deep reverence well may claim, while angels prostrate fall,—
In heaven extolled, on earth adored—
The Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

No other name is given for man to plead with God,
No ladder betwixt earth and heaven, by angel footsteps trod;
Through this all gifts must be implored—
The Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

When hope and joy abound, gladdening the path we go,
This Name the living spring is found whence these bright graces flow;
From this pure fount the streams are poured—
The Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And when our comforts flee, and life's sweet flowers are dead,
This Name's divinest melody peace through the heart can shed;
Grief vanishes at this sweet word—
The Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The Christian knows full well, his darts when Satan plies,
This Name with talismanic spell their power will paralyze;
He wields it both as shield and sword—
The Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Name above every name! I bind Thee to my heart,—
My passport, plea, and only claim, when from all else I part;
Heaven's gates fly open at that word—
The Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord."

CHARITY REJOICETH IN THE TRUTH.

What is Truth?—The Bible Answer—The Life and Words of Jesus evidence of His Love for the Truth—Satan and his Work—The Believer rejoices in Salvation—In Sanctification—In the Promise of Glory—Love of the Truth necessitates a Missionary Spirit—Henry Martyn—Rev. David Brown—Varied Causes of Joy—Three o' Ane—The Three Steps—Dr. Payson—The dying Boy—Christian Friends joy in Bible assurance of Eternal Reunion.

THE first thought, connected with this subject, that suggests itself is, what does truth here signify? Is its sense confined to the common meaning of the word, honesty in action, and rectitude of thought and speech? or, further, to the love of all that is pure, and beautiful, and exalting? In such sense, the love of truth is possessed by very many of the unregenerate, for in every human being are preserved some of the traits—though more or less dimmed by sin, alas!—which were originally implanted by the Creator's hand; and of course, therefore, by every child of Adam who has been born again, in a far higher degree will this love and appreciation of truth be experienced. But along with and above it is the view of truth presented by revelation. There Pilate's momentous question, for which he yet waited no reply, is plainly answered; for we read, in more passages than one, that the Triune God is truth, and that His word is truth. Thus of the Father it is written, "He that sent me is true," He is "a God of truth;" of the Son, "I am the truth;" of the Spirit, that He is "the Spirit of

truth;" and of the written testimony, "Thy word is truth." But how can the sinner rejoice in all this? If God is so essentially pure and perfect, how can He be apprehended by the transgressor? Blessed be God, His very love of truth has opened out, not a means of access only, but of perfect union between Him and man; and, turning again to revelation, we find how the sinner can be made to rejoice in God's truthfulness, by the declaration of that which is pre-eminently set forth as the truth—that is, the adaptation of God to His revolted creatures. God had manifested Himself through the law; but such revelation of His perfection had served only to awe men—to keep them from touching any spots sanctified by His open presence. "Truth came by Jesus Christ." What is this truth—this blessed reality—which justifies those who were otherwise undone for ever? Turn we eagerly to the new dispensation, the Gospel record; what find we here? "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." John "bare witness unto the truth." Now, what do we find elsewhere set forth as the object of Christ's mission to the world? "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" "God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him,"—"that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What was the witness of John? "Make straight the way of the Lord;" "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." The whole message of God, then, is the truth; not the law only, but the Gospel also; not the

promise of salvation alone, but the threat of condemnation as well.

Jesus said, "If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Not free to act as we please; not our own; not licensed to give the reins to the fleshly lusts. This is the truth—that salvation is offered freely to every man; he is asked to bring nothing, because he has nothing; the pardon is full, and has been bought by the finished work and death of Christ—man has but to believe and accept the offer; this is the truth that love is glad of, because God's heart is so large and gracious that He longs for the happiness of His whole creation; but it is only a part of the truth, and the new-born child of God rejoices in the other part as well; that discipleship requires the impartation and acceptance of God's character as well as of His forgiveness: this, too, is alone of Him; the Spirit only can work of good in man's heart, but His indwelling, and teachings, and strivings with nature must be fostered, and at all costs the forgiven child must be made like unto his Saviour. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." This is the truth—that He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end of our hope—the Author and Finisher, the Source and Perfecter, of our faith. Through Him we have forgiveness, through Him sonship, through Him intimate communion, through Him godliness of character, through Him glory. This is the truth—that there is a Saviour provided for the lost, a Sanctifier for the unholy, a Giver of glory to the death-condemned sinner.

This is the truth, and He who is love planned it, and now rejoices in it. Let us turn to the Godman, to learn more of the details which the knowledge and love of it

should effect in the character and life of the men who accept the truth. Jesus came to seek and save the lost; He gave Himself unreservedly up to the work; His presence on earth ever testified to this, for otherwise He would not have left His glory, which He had had with the Father since before the world was; it was no self-pleasing that induced Him to bear thirty-three years of humbling, privation, and cruel treatment. It was love only such as human heart cannot fathom, that gave this evidence of its intensity and sincerity. Of His own will He lived and died on earth, that the number of pure and happy spirits, which should for ever abide in His Father's house, might be multiplied. And when any believed, He saw in them the travail of His soul, and was satisfied; day by day, in weariness, amidst ingratitude and reproach, He journeyed from place to place, telling forth the message of saving truth; often even the night was spent in the same labour, pleading for those to whom He had declared the words of life. Homeless, unrested, hungry, He never availed Himself of the many lawful reasons for withholding Himself from any who sought Him. And how warmly He sympathised in the labours of, how heartily He rejoiced in the successes granted to, His co-workers! And not only was His desire to have a pardoned people, but even to raise each child up to share His perfection of purity and knowledge. Himself the Creator of this beautiful world, and all its varied living and inanimate things, how must He have rejoiced in His work! we know how He strove that His people should be enlightened in mind, by continually pointing to nature's loveliness, and making them take notice of its varied wonders.

And of His fulness His people receive, and they therefore likewise rejoice in the truth. Satan has no

truth in him, and therefore they have to fight against him whenever they follow after truth. He seeks to deaden the senses to the perception of those things which ought to swell the soul with admiring love and adoring wonder, or else to wrap the heart in the creation, and make it forget Him that made all, and Himself far exceeds all that He has wrought. And so with all that is upright in character, and noble in invention ; if he cannot eradicate God's implanted taste for these things, he strives to make man boast of himself, set up morality for his God, or worship talent; so turning good into the handmaid of evil; but against him, and the evil-inclined heart within, the believer ever is on his guard, and seeks to have only his Master's joy perfected in him.

Love rejoiceth not only in truth, but in *the* truth; not in a portion only, but in the whole collectively. May the Holy Spirit help us rightly to understand the varied points in it which make the recipient of grace rejoice like his Lord!

And, first, the loving believer is glad in the message of *salvation*, not only because without it he were an eternally death-doomed man, but also because, in and by the plan of salvation his God is glorified; the love it testifies is his boast; so unearthly! so unselfish! the whole scheme so grand in its conception! so perfect in its working and results! And it gives him present access by faith, and eternal access face to face, to Him who is the dearest object of his love. Beyond this, the truth of *sanctification* gives him joy; to be like Jesus is his highest aim; he can wish nothing better for himself; to please his Master, by apprehending His lessons and increasingly acting in strict accordance with them, is enough stimulus to nerve him to any effort; and as he imbibes

of that Master's Spirit, the holiness, once alien to him, will become a habit—a second nature; for its own sake it will become loved. Intuitively, all that is lovely will become his study, his admiration, his model. All in which he traces a Godlike resemblance will have interest for him; where he can he will copy; he will always seek to have his tastes purified, his knowledge increased, his attainments heightened. It is written, "They that worship God must worship Him in truth;" love must be without dissimulation; the service must be the hearty offering of the spirit; the aim must be single; the motive pure. Guided by the Spirit, the loving disciple's chief delight is to search the Scriptures, and there find revealed glimpses of the Lord; there he learns that, by searching, no flaw can be found in Him; but fresh, deeper, more dazzling evidences of His perfection ever and anon open on the waiting soul. So loving and so waiting, he drinks in of the same upon which he gazes, and thus, by the Spirit, from time to time, tramples Satan under his feet, subdues some old habit of sin, yields up some peculiarity that witnesses to a spirit of self-pleasing, and finds new and ever-opening pleasure in putting on some higher point of Christlike attainment. Love rejoices in all tokens of growth in grace, not with self-vaunting, but with humble, thankful appreciation of the Spirit's lent power, because it delights in resembling the beloved, and in giving Him joy. The Christian is thus an essentially happy man; in everything he gives thanks; for he is seeking to lose all desire, apart from God's will, and thus can leave all in implicit confidence in the hands of Infinite Love; he can trust where he cannot trace, and, when his heart fails, leans on Him who is the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever. Now he rejoices from

sympathy of taste, as well as love of God's exaltation in His triumph over evil; and while his heart trembles and bleeds for those who *will not* be saved, he yet is thankful that love and holiness shall prevail, and that all enemies shall be put under his Master's feet. He rejoices evermore; all is well, for his thought dwells on the one grand theme, salvation through the blood, sanctification through the Spirit—all of grace; and apart from Christ he knows no wish. He can go on his way always singing; for on all sides he finds tokens of his Father's presence—bright things and good, in which he can rejoice. If nature has always a voice of joy to him, testifying of its Creator; if the landscape, the trees, the flowers, the insects, the water, speak to him of God's care for the journey, and the sky o'erhead of His preparation for the journey's end; so, too, as he looks on the works of man's inventive genius, as he lists to the strains of voice and instrument, as he hears the thoughts of great minds on varied themes,—in all these he will love to see and feel his God. He sees some lesson in every person and thing, and is glad in all that shines, even if unsanctified itself, because that shining is a reflection, though distorted, of some perfect trait in the Creator. Again, the *promise of heaven* gives him joy; how he feeds on the thought,

> "I'm nearer home to-day,
> Than I've ever been before!"

How is all sorrow, sickness, pain, bereavement, weariness, soothed with the assurance, I'm going home!—

> "It may be I'm nearer home,
> Nearer now than I think!"[1]

[1] Carey.

How has the promise that the redeemed shall abide for evermore in the presence of Jesus cheered the afflicted, the tempted, the lonely believer! Love can abide the temporary absence of Jesus, since He has promised, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also;" for, bright as His revelation of Himself to faith now is, yet earth must ever be a wilderness till He come. Looking for Jesus, listening for His trumpet-call, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body;" this is love's attitude. "Rejoicing in hope;" this is the blessed portion of those who even now have entered on the joys of pardon and sanctification,—a hope that can never make ashamed, because He holds it forth who is truth, who cannot lie, neither can He deceive any.

Love rejoiceth in the truth; beyond its own happiness in loving, and being beloved of, God, it goes forth in believers, as in their Master, towards all mankind, it yearns for universal blessedness, it is active, self-consecrating, and fervent, towards all in whom is the breath of life, be they personally known or unknown, without distinction of country, language, colour, or ability. Most gladly does it spend itself for the spreading abroad the tidings of the Saviour's love; this end regulates all the believer's social duties; to tell the truth is joy to him; to find his message successful in winning a soul is gladness too deep for expression. Such love was it which changed the sorrowing disciples into joyous apostles, even at the moment of parting with Him they best loved. A little while, they felt, was given them, a golden opportunity lent, for adding to the number of heaven's rejoicing band, of those who should add to the glory of their Leader.

How sweetly and brilliantly did the same spirit shine forth in the saintly Henry Martyn, of whom testimony was given that his love and zeal burnt "with the intenseness and rapid blaze of heated phosphorus;"[1] that he was a "bright and lovely jewel, shining in all the dignity of love, and seeming to carry about with him such a heavenly majesty, as impressed the mind beyond description."[2] "All the dignity to which he aspired was to be the servant of Christ's little ones. . . . A more perfect character I never met with, nor expect to see on earth. Every opportunity I had of enjoying his company only increased my love and veneration for him."[3]

Having himself been made a partaker of the grace of Christ, and enabled to testify, "My dear Redeemer is a fountain of life to my soul; . . . blessed be God, I have now experienced that Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God," he immediately resolved to give his talents, his time, his all, to the preaching of the truth. Deeply-loved and admired by a large circle of friends, in a position where his uncommon talents were appreciated by men of superior mind, he turned aside gladly from all, and, alone, set forth on a mission to degraded, ignorant heathen in a far-distant land, trying to the health of Europeans; and from the depths of his rejoicing soul burst forth the loving testimony of his inward feelings, "I do not wish for any heaven upon earth besides that of preaching the precious Gospel of Jesus Christ to immortal souls. . . . Oh, gladly shall this base blood be shed, every drop of it, if India can but be benefited in one of her children!"

[1] Rev. David Brown. [2] Rev. T. Thómason.
[3] Rev. Daniel Corrie.

A double love constrains the believer in his ministry, —a delight in serving the Master, and having His glory added to, and anxious care for sinners. Specially does the first motive seem to have actuated another of India's honoured missionaries,—the Rev. David Brown. "Christ," he said, "will find His way to the hearts of men, and there will be a great company to praise Him. I know not why we should wish to be saved, but for this purpose; or why, but for this purpose, we should desire the conversion of heathens, Turks, and infidels. To find them at the feet of Jesus will be a lovely sight! Our feeble voices cannot praise Him much. We shall be glad to see them clapping their hands and casting their crowns before Him; for all in heaven and earth cannot sufficiently praise Him. I see no cause to wish for anything but the advancement of that knowledge by which there is some accession of praise to His holy and blessed name."

There is another Bible truth which gives gladness to the servant of God; it is, that there is hope regarding the ultimate safety of those who for long have despised the offers of grace; many once violent opposers become eminent disciples; they who scorn and ill-treat God's messengers may yet be chosen vessels. Such was the case with the persecutor Saul, who became a chief amongst the saints. Love knows no mean desire of revenge, no impatient sickening of once-fervid interest, but longs with special desire for those who have imposed most anxious labour, with least hopefulness.

Thus have we seen, dear reader, how the believer's joy is only in the truth, and that this source is a full, ever-increasing one. He joys in his Lord; he joys over his own saved, increasingly-sanctified, and (coming)

glorified condition; he joys in the spread of the knowledge and love of the truth, as it is in Jesus, amongst his fellow-creatures. Few attain to the symmetry of Martyn's stature in Christ; with most, some one especial point more particularly arrests the interest,—either work or meditation, others' salvation or personal sanctification, love for the Master's glory or the creature's safety. Let us seek more to grow in knowledge, appreciation, and love of the *whole* truth; to have Christ formed in us, in all His perfect beauty, His faultless perfection; whilst yet we despise not the day of small things, but patiently, step by step, mount upwards, gleaning from every fellow-traveller's experience and attainments. Cheering, lovely, and helpful is much that we see and hear, had we but prepared, lowly, teachable, and seeking hearts. May the following cuttings, as it were, from the flower-borders of Christian life, aid and quicken us, as we follow those who through faith and patience now inherit the promises! Most men will not act on advice, but learn only through (often bitter) experience of their own; but so let it not be with us. All stand on the same platform, and though characters, training, and opportunities vary, still what has helped others may help us, and into their minds may have shone a ray not received direct by us, but which may yet be received through the detailing their experience. God grant it may be so with us now, and that they, being dead, may yet speak with power!

Some hundred years ago, a poor idiot, travelling about the country, arrived at the farm of Abingdon, in a Scotch parish. He was admitted to rest by the fire, and it was soon discovered that he was unwell. On being asked what ailed him, his reply was, "I'm unco cauld." Warm

gruel was given him, and then he was put to rest. At a late hour, one of the maid-servants came in, saying, that "the puir thing was aye muttering and speaking to himsel'." The farmer and his family went to listen; over and over again was he distinctly repeating,—

"Three o' Ane,
And Ane o' Three;
And Ane o' Three
Will save me."

The next morning dawned, but the soul of the poor wanderer had gone to the bosom of that "Ane o' Three" on whose mercy he had relied.

See we not here manifested the truth, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, the weak things, the base, the things which are despised?" Did not the idiot grapple and joy in a revelation which we are too apt to undervalue, or at least unbalance? The grand fact of a Triune God, of a three in one, a unity in plurality, is not the source of admiring joy, of thankful love, it ought to be.

Rowland Hill, the celebrated preacher, was rebuked and taught by another idiot. The clergyman visited the poor man one day, and entered into conversation with him. "Well, Richard, do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?"

"To be sure I do; don't you?"

"Heaven is a long way off," said the minister; "and the journey thither is difficult."

"Do you think so? I think heaven is very near."

"Most people think it a very difficult matter to get to heaven."

"I think heaven is very near," said poor Dick again,

"and the way to it very short; there are only three steps there."

Mr. Hill replied, "Only three steps!"

Dick repeated, "Only three steps."

"And pray," said the pastor, "what do you consider those three steps to be?"

"Those three steps are—*out of self, into Christ, into glory!*"

Beautiful simplicity of faith! Those gifted with intellect too often stumble through questioning, where the idiot received in childlike trustfulness, and thus overreach the mark, and miss the goal.

Brightly was like trust evidenced, in severe suffering, by another child of God, Dr. Payson. To a company of young men, who had assembled in his room at his request, he gave this dying testimony: "My young friends, you will one day be obliged to embark on the same voyage on which I am just embarking; and as it has been my especial employment during my past life to recommend to you a Pilot, to guide you through this voyage, I wished to tell you what a precious Pilot He is, that you may be induced to choose Him for yours. I felt desirous that you might see that the religion I have preached can support me in death. You know that I have many ties which bind me to earth—a family to whom I am strongly attached, and a people that I love almost as well; but the other world acts like a much stronger magnet, and draws my heart away from this. Death comes every night, and stands by my bed-side in the form of terrible convulsions, every one of which threatens to separate the soul from the body. These continue to grow worse and worse, until every bone is almost dislocated with pain, leaving me with the certainty that I

shall have it all to endure again the next night. Yet, while my body is thus tortured, the soul is perfectly, perfectly happy and peaceful—more happy than I can possibly express to you! I lie here, and feel these convulsions extending higher and higher, without the least uneasiness; but my soul is filled with joy unspeakable! I seem to swim in a flood of glory, which God pours down upon me! And I know—I know—that my happiness is but begun; I cannot doubt that it will last for ever! And, now, is this all delusion? Is it a delusion which can fill the soul to overflowing with joy, in such circumstances? It is not! I feel that it is not! I do not merely know that I shall enjoy all this—I enjoy it now! The battle's fought, and the victory is won—the victory is won for ever!"

"Only just think," said a dying child, "most likely by this time to-morrow I shall have seen Jesus, and be learning fast in the upper classes what I have been learning a very little in this school-room of pain. Oh, I do want to understand God better—to love as He deserves, for His own sake! I believe all the Bible says of Him now; but I want to see Him, and have all made clear to my mind—then, oh, won't I be full of love and praise!" A few days previously he had said: "Ah! no one knows how glad we Christians are—do they? There's not one fault in our best Friend; and we've got His hold on us now, and by-and-bye He'll lift us up to live in His own house. And we'll be better off than many servants here; for they don't see much of their master, but we'll be always by Him. Oh! isn't it kind of Him not to mind us—to be so humble? Do you know, one of the things that makes me most long to go is, that I think He'll teach me faster there about what He thinks and

knows? Do you think the angels are like schoolmasters to Christians when they first get into heaven, and don't know much of Jesus?" On being asked for a dying testimony, as to what now were his feelings in passing from earth, with a gentle look of reproach, as if such were unneeded, when for months Jesus had been "so precious" to him, his "one great joy," he with slow and emphatic confidence said, "You know Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And never can his eager longing for the conversion of the unsaved members of his family be forgotten by those who were with him. He would call for his only brother, and hold his hand whilst he prayed for him; and then besought him to come to Jesus. "Now, Billy—now, don't you forget; now mind and come to God; He can forgive you, and He wants to; only you must come and do just as He tells you. Now, my dear brother, I'm going away; you'll soon not have any brother here, but I'll be looking out for you; and when you come up here, remember how long I laid in this room, and that I told you it was God's love that sent me the pain; don't ever think it was hard of Him. Now mind, Billy, it was I who was hard; I was proud, and full of learning and dress, and so God brought me down. Ah! my dear brother (as the boy turned shyly and timidly away), you get tired of my speaking to you, but, oh, I want to have you come to Jesus Christ! Won't you tell me before I die, you will ask God to forgive you, and make you love Him?" More than once did he burst into tears, and cry out his prayer, so intense was his longing for his father and brother. To a visitor, after speaking of this his chief desire, he said, "My dear mother wants me to pray for her as much as for them; but you know God has got her heart,

and therefore Jesus will give her all she wants. We, who are in Him, must spend all our time—our *little* time—in begging for sinners who don't pray for themselves."

Charity rejoiceth in the truth. Hearts linked in the indissoluble bond of Gospel ties hold the hope held out in Scripture of eternal reunion in heaven, as the dearest privilege of their love. Else dreary indeed were affection; better far to be without the temporary happiness. Alas! how many, in blindness of soul, drag on a sad existence without it; how is it that we dare live without an assured hope concerning each treasure? Beloved reader! wait not for the misery consequent on the uncertainty of state of one departed hence, to drive you to zealous labours, and fond, prayerful solicitude. Live in prayer for all, that those who seem to be following the Lord may be kept unto the end, and that the strangers may be ingathered. How eagerly, in all ages, has the desire of many been to have some knowledge of the world beyond the grave; like the Thessalonians, to know whether the communion of earthly friendship is to have its sequence of perfected fellowship above. Much, very much, that is blessed is already told us; the details of the fulness of perfection and joy we may contentedly leave for the revelation of the time when we shall enter on the personal experience of those now hidden things.

This we know, whether or not earth's fondnesses shall there be specially ripened, the hopes that give confident trust and joy regarding our own salvation give like assurance for those we love in the Lord. Their happiness and holiness shall be perfected, and true love delights in this. That which soothes our own bodily pain, mental weariness, or spiritual anguish—that which

is our support, our joy, our strength now—that which is our own joyful expectation—is theirs too; no tie so closely links, so assimilates interests, as the love of Jesus.

Then, again, it is a *gathering together* for which we are taught to look. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one. And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." "Them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb." And, since human affections are implanted of God, and were shared by Jesus, as Moses and Elias were recognised, and the rich man in hell remembered his brethren on earth, we may lawfully hope, and believe, that there shall be mutual recognition and love amongst the saints in glory. Is not this the comfort which keeps the members of the church militant from sorrowing as those who have no hope, when death has summoned away the companion loved and leant on—the friend dearer than life? Is not the truth, "I shall go to him," the balm that heals the stricken mourner, that nerves him to walk alone through the remainder of his journey? Evidently the supplemental joys of heaven are only faintly sketched, some barely touched, many unrevealed, that saints below may learn that it is the will of God that He Himself should be heaven's sun—He the centre

of every thought, of every joy. He knows the proneness of the human heart to make to itself idols, and therefore, in mercy, He would keep back that part of the picture which might become a snare; sufficient that all shall be with Him, all shall see Him, all shall be like Him, all shall be together. Here is a green pasture of hope for love to feed on—a promise satisfying its every desire; *with the Lord, with His people; and for ever!* Here a joy midst death, and suffering, and sorrow; these shall end soon—they lead to glory.

Oh, dear fellow-believer! seek to have more of this love, and then you shall have more joy;—joy in life, joy in death, joy in sunshine, joy in shade. The truth is, that there is unutterable, unending, present and eternal blessedness for all who come to God through Christ, and in the Spirit's strength live and walk in Him; that there is a "blessed" written over every discipline awarded to the children of His family; and love rejoices in that it is a partaker in all this; that a glorious band are fellow-sharers; that it may be the means of adding to that number; and that now and for ever, in all and by all things, God is and shall be glorified!

CHAPTER XII.

"Follower of the lowly Lamb,
Hast thou ceased to watch and pray?
O'er what neighbour's faults and sins
Hast thou cast the veil to-day?
If thou answerest scorn with scorn,
Adding to the heap of ill,
Art thou of the Spirit born?—
Workest thou the Father's will?

Bear it—yes, in silence bear it,
Bitter howsoe'er it be;
Not a human ear must share it,
Known alone to God and thee.
Secret griefs shall train thy soul
Into finer sympathies
With Him who makes the spirit whole,
And calls all our sorrows His."

L. N. R.

"Teach me to feel another's want,
To hide the faults I see;
The mercy I to others grant,
That mercy show to me."

CHARITY BEARETH ALL THINGS.

Greek Signification—Natural Loves multiplied—Danger in Society—Much Judgment evidence of little Self-knowledge—Nature is quick to expose Sin—Each his Brother's Keeper—A Story against Scandal—The Quaker and the Thief—Scene in a Workhouse—Two Good Things—Divine Love an Example—Secret of a Believer's Joy—The Gardener's Bouquet—Sacredness of Infirmities—The Trysting—Love suffereth—Little Annie, the Missionary Collector.

"THE verb στεγω almost universally, in classical Greek, means to *cover*, and not to bear. It is quite a secondary sense, that of bear, and as here the primary sense suits best, and the secondary sense is supplied by another word (ὑπομενει), *endureth*, it seems to me we may rejoice in the added thought of concealment, especially as it is borne out by Proverbs, 'Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.' It is *so* regarding an injury, *as* if we had not been injured, for the Master's sake, and for our brother's, love passing by a transgression as if not seeing it."[1]

Have you ever known, reader, what it is to hear a favourite of yours scanned over, and his character, appearance, manners, or opinions harshly handled by unloving tongues? If so, has not your blood boiled, and, far from joining in such criticism, even over an incontestably weak point, have you not either kept silence, whilst your spirit inwardly chafed, or warmly espoused his cause, denying or defending the grounds of accusation? Beautiful as

[1] Rev. E. H. Bickersteth.

such love is, there is yet self in it; Christianity goes further, and would have us watch the interests of all with like jealousy. Oh, to realise that in each human being we have God's representative, and that in our conduct to them we are bearing ourselves towards Him! *As* He has loved us, *so* He desires us to love one another; that is, to love each so much, that we would do all possible for him during life, and, if necessary, lay down life for him. Naturally we cover the infirmities as well as the sins of our loved ones; they are dear to us as our own selves; rather would we have our own character traduced than a word said against them. So must we, for Christ's sake, love all, shield all. There is a bright and a dark side to every one; let our care be to set forth in the sight of others only those things which we can praise, those things which we deem likely to excite esteem and admiration; and when evil is set before us by others, gently let us, if possible, refute the charge, or counterbalance it by bringing forward some trait of excellence in the same.

Is not one of the great evils of society the call for conversation from those who, moving in a continuous round of frivolity amongst like spendthrifts of time, are comparatively empty-headed, and are thus reduced for subject-matter to drag out little nothings, and make much of idiosyncrasies in mutual acquaintances? And even amongst those who scorn the gaieties and the whirl of fashion, is not the monotony in many a quiet circle brightened by tales of scandal? and is not conversation interlarded with now a witty, now a stale criticism? Are not facts of wrong-doing repeated and exaggerated with an eagerness that proves an unhallowed itching for excitement, be the subject what it may?

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." Now, since all mankind are our brethren, it follows each brother must be loved; affection for one does not unbind from the tie to another. We know something of the measure of love required for *each* brother, by examining into that we bear our favourites. John was the disciple Jesus peculiarly loved, but for the others He equally lived and died; Lazarus was the special friend, but He raised up from the dead a stranger as well; and so believers, though their heart naturally inclines towards the few, must have room for all; the character and interest of each brother with whom they are given opportunity to make acquaintance must be dear to them. If such be duty, how is it that we still entertain so much selfishness, so much quickness to note the faults we see? Alas! here is sad evidence of the power and presence of Satan, urging on unweariedly the interests of his kingdom, and overbalancing the influence of the Spirit by seconding the desires and inclinations of our own sinful flesh. Painful, indeed, is the retrospect of the past—the memory of deeds and words so at variance with the character of the love which beareth all things; yet, let us retire often into solitude with God, and recall as much as we can, for so shall we learn in what our chief snares lie, the times most generally fruitful of evil, and thus be for the future forewarned and forearmed.

Alas! that we should need the command, "Speak not evil one of another, brethren." What fearful ignorance of self is herein testified! Who are we, that we should declare another's sins? How beautiful, how pure, must be the worst picture we draw of a fellow-sinner, compared to the vileness hidden in our own bosom! Let us resolve, dear fellow-pilgrim! in a strength not our own, hence-

forth to set ourselves steadfastly against all outward tokens of an imperfect, partial love. A thinking mind must necessarily form a judgment; but there is danger in unfolding that judgment to another; it may give a bias for life, and impress indelibly a painful opinion.

The expression of unfavourable judgments, or unfolding of faults, may injure the listener in three ways; by accustoming him to hear and talk of that which should keenly grieve him, but to which he will grow increasingly hardened thereby; by implanting in him thoughts of evil which had not presented themselves before to his mind (history proves this, even crimes having been copied); and, thirdly, to an unconverted listener, such contrariety of action to profession may prove a stumbling-block, and the believer may thus incur blood-guiltiness; even though he has been drawn on, and thought he was proving an interesting and pleasing companion; for the ungodly are not slow to mark the inconsistencies of the children of God, and always respect those most who firmly hold in their life that which they declare to be their principles.

Love covereth all things; love worketh no ill to his neighbour; yet, amongst the redeemed, how many evil reporters are there, following the evil examples of Ham and Joseph! how unthinkingly do we make known, if not even caricature, the infirmities, and stigmatise the errors, of others! There is no effort to do this, though, alas! there is to keep from so doing.

We see in children the natural unlovingness of the human heart. How common is it to hear, "I'll go and tell your mamma!" or, "Mamma, —— did so and so." From childhood to youth, from youth to manhood, and from manhood to old age, evidences of the same spirit mark man's walk. Oh, reader! do you not feel condemned on this

head? Have you never said behind another's back what you would not say of him in his presence? Have you never said before another what you knew would call up the blush of shame on his cheek, and give at least temporary pain? These things ought not so to be, and shall not be so in heaven; and we must remember that they who have hope of dwelling in that land of love must purify themselves, in preparatory anticipation of that great joy.

Love covereth all things; if need be to condemn, alone, in privacy, let the fault be found in meekness, considering your own fallibility; in love, yearning for the evil to be overcome; but otherwise cover all you see unattractive. Be tender over another's sores as over your own; and make a real study of each, so as to avoid opening temptation to him, or affording opportunities by which the evil points in him shall be made manifest to others. Remember that God has placed us in each other's care, if not with power to hurt the body, at least to wound the spirit; we are our brother's keeper. Oh! for grace to quicken us to a sense of our responsible trust; to make us alive to the charge God gives us in the character of each we know; keenly sensitive on their account as our own; oh, for a truly loving spirit, ever to cover over what is evil in all!

Elizabeth —— was asked by her brother to pay him a visit at his lodgings, in the little village of ——. No railroad had yet come near the spot, so that it still remained buried in its wooded, retired loneliness; few were the houses there besides the cottages of the villagers. But, as is usual in such places, the few neighbours took overweening interest in each other's concerns, and the histories of each were invented, if not told, and probably

some details added to them. The arrival of a stranger occasioned some small stir therefore; parties were given her, and all her days might have been likewise engaged had not her brother laughingly claimed his share. Once, however, an invitation was accepted for a quiet day with a large family. Not willingly was the brother's consent given, for he was a truly holy man, and had chiefly sought his sister's company in order to seek to lure her to better joys than the world has to offer; and though he only warned his sister against the dangers of unsanctified pleasures, his heart followed her in prayer throughout the day, for he knew that Satan finds mischief for idle thoughts and hands.

Evening came, and the gladsome girl returned full of much innocent pleasure she had enjoyed, but, as he had feared, well versed also in the scandal of the place. He would not check her save by grave silence, and she rattled on, stopping now and then with "Don't look so grave, Fred; I know what you are thinking, but it's good fun! You should have seen how Miss —— copied her;" or, "Miss —— imitated his voice so capitally; she sent one into convulsions." At last she came round to the clergyman, who had been an old college acquaintance of her brother's. "Why, Fred, you never told me about him, and it's such a good story—almost like a novel; and you played such a noble part in it; why didn't you tell us?" Her brother expressed his sincere grief that she had been told it; known as the clergyman's friend, the scandal had not reached his ears; in some circuitous way, through friends in the college neighbourhood, the tale had been discovered. "I always wondered," continued Elizabeth, "why you got the gift of the cure for —— instead of for your favourite; and was always teazing you about it.

Don't you remember? Now I wonder more than ever at your choosing such a man; and when he had behaved so ungratefully, too, to you!" "You have heard one side of the question," said her brother, "have you heard the other?" Rapidly the girl repeated all she had been told. "Lizzie, as far as I was concerned, ——'s secret should have died with me; I found it out by accident, as the world says — by God's appointment, as I feel. It was my duty not only to speak plainly to him of his sin, but also to insist on reparation to some extent, under threat of discovering it if he refused. Gladly I did what I could towards helping him, for he was poor; but it came to light after he left college, and my part was so discovered, much to my own regret. When —— became a penitent, converted man, can you wonder at my doing him a good turn, to prove that love alone had dictated my former interference? I had hoped here no one would have known his antecedents; but, since they do, it shall more than ever be my part to stand by him, and lend him the help of my influence. But, Lizzie, promise me not a word of this shall ever pass your lips again." And continuing, so solemnly and earnestly did he speak on the wickedness of laying bare another's sins or foibles, that she never forgot it, nor omitted from that day specially praying to be kept from this sin, and have a watch set before her mouth.

A very pious quaker was disturbed one night by footsteps outside his house; rising from bed, he softly opened a back door to listen. In the yard was an outhouse, and under it a cellar, near the window of which a man was receiving the contents of a pork-barrel from another man within the cellar. The quaker approached, and the thief outside fled. The old Christian stepped up to the cellar

window, and received the pieces of pork from the thief within, who presently asked his supposed accomplice, "Shall we take it all?" "Yes, take it all," said the owner, softly. When all had been handed up the thief himself came out. What was his horror to find, not his companion in crime, but the master of the house before him! He knelt and entreated mercy, alleging that want alone had driven him to this sin, and promising never to steal again, and begged that what he had done might not be exposed, lest it should prove his ruin. "If thou hadst asked me for meat," said the quaker, "it would have been given thee. I pity thy poverty and thy weakness, and esteem thy family. Thou art forgiven." The thief was about gladly to depart, when the old man said, "Take the pork, neighbour." "No, no," said the thief, "I don't want the pork." "Thy necessity was so great that it led thee to steal. One half of the pork thou must take with thee." The thief declared he would never be able to touch a morsel of it; the memory linked with it would choke him. He begged to be allowed, as a favour, to go without it. But the quaker was determined, and dismissed him with a bag on his back containing half the contents of the barrel. The thief was a near neighbour, and the two men and their families continued to visit as of old, the matter of the theft being kept secret. The old man had learnt something of the love which covereth another's sins, and much was gained by his practice of the lesson; the sinner's character saved, probably a course of evil stayed, his family rescued from ruin, and his love won; he saved whilst he punished at his own cost.

"Did she never tell you," said a young, tawdrily-dressed woman to a Christian lady, as they stood by the side of one who, but a few minutes previously, had ceased

to breathe, in the parish union,—"did she never tell you what brought her here?" The lady replied in the negative, adding that Margaret had ever been entirely reserved as to her own history, whilst dwelling oft and fully on her position, as an heir of glory about to enter on her inheritance. Her clothes and manner had testified to better days, but all that was known of her was that she had entered the institution in a starving, worn-out condition a few weeks since. The sister had come in answer to the last effort ever made by Margaret, and had arrived only a short time before her death. No one had been by when the sisters met, and nicety of feeling had left Eleanor alone by the bedside, till the visitor came up to soothe, if possible, the passionate wailing of the mourner. Her testimony to Margaret's trust in her Saviour, and joy to go to Him, appeared to give no comfort; presently the poor woman looked up, and with fixed gaze into her face, asked the lady the above question. Then, burying her face in her hands, she gave the following facts, in words to this effect, though necessarily here curtailed:—

"We were fellow-servants in a large house; she was always a good, steady girl, fond of her book, and such a one for religion! I took just the opposite tack, and was giddy as could be. Our own mother had died, and father married again, so the door there was shut to us, and Maggie and I had only each other to look to. I got acquainted with a young man who served a tradesman of our family, and had a child unbeknown to our people, for I got a holiday at the time. I had said to Maggie as how I would do like other folk, and leave it in a bundle in some corner, but she had promised to pay for its keeping, so it was put out. She tried all she could to

make me give up my ways, but I threatened to leave the place, and just go right away on the town; so she, to keep me, instead of saving for herself, kept the little one. Three more I had after that, and she, poor dear! thought she'd better take a room and keep them herself by needlework, as we'd have nothing to say to them; and she couldn't bear to tell on me before a court; and was afeared, beside, I would make off from her, and she loved me so that it would have broke her heart, I think, to have had me go away. Well, for a time, she went on nicely; I took her a thing now and then, but my own health gave way, and I had to get into hospital often, and couldn't keep in gentlemen's families any more; and my young man he deserted me, and it was too much for Maggie; work as she would, she couldn't make the ends meet; and so, when she grew too bad to do anything, she had to come here. Oh, Maggie, that you should die a pauper, and be buried by the parish, and all because of the sister you loved, and would stick to spite of her sin! And to think you never told any one at whose door the blame rightly lay!"

Poor Eleanor had sown seeds of bitter sorrow, which she had to reap, but her future was hallowed by the memory of her sainted sister, and, though poor and ill, her children were provided for.

They that are quick to lay bare faults in others only manifest to their hearers how little knowledge of God and themselves they yet have. This is why the most holy least condemn and shun the most depraved. They have been into the wilderness with Jesus, and had revealed to them in its stillness the sin which is mixed with their whole being.

Two things are good for believers, for working out

this love that covereth all things in them; much loneliness of spirit with God, and much work for Him. In the one is shown the fearful contrast between purity and sin—between the Model and the professed imitators; and the other affords constant ground for self-humbling, as failure in the manner and effects of working are continually apparent; and much occupation gives Satan fewer opportunities for leading into censorious judgments, and filling the mind with vanity.

What would become of us, dear reader! were not this covering love an attribute of our gracious God? Where would be our joy in looking onward but for the assurance, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins;" "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." He is the King of Peace, and sent His Son as the Messenger, the Prince of Peace; born at a time emblematical of the effects of His reign, when wars were hushed, and the temple of Janus was closed, the angels proclaimed His mission to be peace on earth, and His parting legacy was peace. Not to make known judgment, not to lay bare sin, not to herald punishment, did He as man walk with man, but to give plain assurance of the almost incredible truth, that sin had found its victim, and that God no more stood afar off from the sinner, but was now blind, as it were, to his transgressions, if he would but wash and be made clean in the alone Fountain whose waters avail.

Love covereth all things; here is the simple yet gigantic truth which makes the converted man a new, gladdened creature; he has believed the declaration, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you;" he has faith in the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ; he un-

hesitatingly and unreservedly trusts in the perfect, complete substitution of Christ; and hence he has a holy, steadfast, joyful, albeit humble, assurance. Why is it that such confidence is so oft accounted, even by the children of God, unlawful—a sign of self-trust, of pride? Nay, rather there is pride in the refusal to try to obtain it. God is most glorified by those who most trust Him; and if He has said He covers the sins of all who look to the cross, shall we not believe that, as we look, ours *are* blotted out? that, hidden in the garment of Christ's righteousness, we do now stand acceptable in God's sight, for His dear Son's sake?

And if this truth gives us continual comfort when we call to remembrance our sins, let us see to it that it always works in us humility when we are enabled to trace any trait of gracious attainment in ourselves. We need covering all over; our very holy things, our very virtues, our very graces, are acceptable only as seen under the cloak of our Leader's lending, as presented through the stamp of His own imposition.

Not only did Jesus, the very God of love, proclaim pardon to His favourite friends, or to those who readily believed and followed Him; most strikingly was His delight in covering all evil manifested in His prayer on the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

So, dear reader, let the same mind be in the disciple as in the Master. "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men;" he must not add fuel to the already existing fire of scandal and censorious judgments. Evil must not stain heart or lip; he must be holy and loving. His business is only to cull flowers for presentation; weeds he must pull up and cast away.

What would be thought of the gardener who, in charge of a spacious and richly-yielding garden, brought his master a bouquet of weeds? Would not his own character of proficiency be damaged? Even so, what must the world in its heart, and far more fellow-disciples, think of him who is known as the gatherer of unsightly faults—the setter forth of evil in his brethren?

Christians, confidentially, are wont to entrust to each other faults they detect in others; in a measure, if done with a pure motive, and in a self-guarded spirit, good may thus be done; special prayer and special effort may avail for their subjugation. But, save in some special cases, were it not better to be wholly silent on such themes, and tell the sin we see only to Him who so purely, earnestly, disinterestedly, and yet interestedly, desires its removal? If the rule of non-passing judgment, of never uttering an unfavourable opinion, were stringently adhered to, what a gap would be made in customary conversation! how marked would be the manner of a believer's language! Here is a point in which peculiarity is desirable; there are foibles in each and all, as well as sins; the world makes light of both in itself, but laughs at, and holds up to mockery, the one, and stigmatises the other, in those around. Surely, believer, there is something sacred in infirmities! Jesus was subject to them; they are not sins (though, if unlawfully indulged, will become such); each one bears about with him a frail clay tenement, which drags down the spirit often; there are peculiarities and idiosyncrasies which, when the individuals have passed through their training course, shall stand out in the beauty of perfection amidst variety. Over many such Jesus says, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." We

deem them often (as we are apt to do the blind, the deaf, the lame, the deformed, the imbecile) imperfect specimens of His workmanship, misshapen executions from His hand—"a blunder of nature." Alas! alas! that we should thus set ourselves as judges on His works, who makes everything good, perfect after its kind, though our finite minds and powers presume to detect flaws. Has God not specially owned what man contemns, or looks on with supreme pity? "Who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord?" Let us remember this, when we think on the natural disposition of any, and strive through the distortion, incident to the yet imperfect state of man, or caused by the unregulated vent of inherent passions, to detect the little germ of beauty implanted in every being by the hand of God Himself. Such gathering up of His crumbs, rather than of Satan's weeds, will be productive of more joy, and will go far towards helping us on towards the fulness of His perfect stature. Now, the picture is yet in the hands of the Painter, the stone of the Sculptor; some parts of the Artist's work are more forward than others; the shading of colour is not yet softened down, rough corners yet await the chisel's polishing; but soon the last touch shall have been put by the Master's hand, and each saint shall stand radiant, complete, and perfect, around the throne.

Oh! how shall we bear to meet there any at whom we have cast stones below? what would be the pain of memory's record, recalling to us a harsh word spoken, or unpleasing impression given, of one taken before us to that world where we can never make them reparation? God, in mercy, keep us from the agony of such remorse, and strengthen us whilst we have time to do good unto all

men, never evil, either lightly, or with intent to pain! Love covereth all things; we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones; in wounding one of His little ones, we wound the Lord.

O Holy Spirit! we do, with intense desire, entreat Thee now so to spread abroad a living, Godlike love in our souls, that we may never betray a brother, but be to each, as far as possible, a covering from harm, a shelter from some of life's smarting pains, a spot affording him an oasis of refreshment as he travels through its dreary desert, a hallowed haven to which he may always turn in trustful confidence, sure of a loving sympathy.

The same verb στεγω is translated in another passage of our English version by the word "suffer."[1] "Paul passed by, and overlooked his rightful claim, that no stumbling-block might hinder the Gospel."[2]

The annual anniversary of the Church Missionary Society was being kept at the village of ——. According to custom, one of the Sunday-school children had been appointed to call at the different cottages, to collect any pence she could persuade the people to give her, besides what they had dropped in the church plate the day before, or intended to give that night at the meeting. Little Annie had been successful, and with a glad smile put the 5*s.* 3*d.* into her pastor's hand. The little messenger was always rewarded by a tenth of the sum she had collected, and the minister gave her the portion due. But Annie returned it, with a pleading petition that he would keep it along with the rest.

"Why so, Annie? your mother is poor, and can't often give you a treat."

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 12. [2] Rev. E. H. Bickersteth.

"Please, sir, there's always such a deal of talk about her who gets this money; all the others say, we go for what we can get for ourselves; it's not true of me, sir, for I love the missionaries and poor black people, and like to do any little thing I can for them; so please say to-night that the collector didn't work for money for herself. I'd much rather it should all go."

"Well, my child, I'll do as you wish, and perhaps next year the chosen girl may do the same."

"Yes, sir, and then there'd be a little more: how nice! We make such a little down here, it's a shame to pay any of it away before it gets to them for whom it is meant. Old Widow —— told me to-day she shouldn't give, for perhaps her mite would go towards treating me, and she'd rather one of her own grandchildren got it; so I told her I didn't mean to take anything; and she said she'd wait to hear from you whether I did as I said, and, if so, she'd put by double for next time. She's got the rheumatics too bad to get down to the school to-night."

Is it not for us to go and do likewise—to take thought for the opinions of others, lest we wound a weak brother's conscience—to be willing to lose personal gain, if the cause of our God shall be benefited thereby? Oh, brother! let the whole force of our effort be set to attain this blessed love, which πανται στεγει,—beareth all things.

CHAPTER XIII.

" I have a great High-Priest above,
Beyond the starry sky,
A Fountain of eternal love,
A Saviour ever nigh.

He bears me on His inmost heart,
Through sunshine, cloud, and sea;
And from His love I cannot part,
Since Jesus died for me.

The golden censer in His hands
Contains my feeble prayers;
And there my Saviour ever stands,
And all my burden bears.

His precious blood is sprinkled still
In every path I tread;
It marks my way to Zion's hill,
My dwelling-place with God.

And when my path was hedged about
With ills I could not flee,
Himself has led me in and out,
Just where I ought to be.

And He has taught me in that cloud
Such lessons of His love,
It seemed as though the thorny road
Shone with the light above.

And soon, with all that blood-bought throng,
Around the throne above,
I'll sing in nobler, sweeter song,
Of Jesu's dying love."

E. WHITFIELD.

CHARITY BELIEVETH ALL THINGS.

Faith is Love's Groundwork—What is Faith?—Objects of Christian's Faith—Peace the consequence of Faith—Scripture Warnings—Difference between enduring and accepting Affliction—The dying Husband and surviving Widow—The Joy that can bear looking into—Jehovah-jireh—The American Dressmaker—Story of a Pillow—Dark Prospects—I've got a Promise—No Chance—Domaire, and the Rich Man—The Staff for Work and Glory—Love believeth well of Fellow-creatures—The Clerk and Backwoodsman—Call for special Inter-trust amongst Believers.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is a calm rest of soul, a laying hold of an unseen thing with certainty,—such grasping of it as gives the same confidence as if the substance were visible; it is the result of a like belief in another's representation as in its own personal judgment. Love believeth all things; faith is love's groundwork, otherwise, wherefore fear of eternity, wish of heaven, trust in revelation? wherefore respect and confidence towards this man, and dislike and mistrust of another? The atheist professes (I do not say believes, because I do not believe there is a being who never entertains hopes, or at least fears, for the future at some time of his life) a conviction that there is no God—nought beyond this world of sense; the consequence is, he knows no spiritual love, for he has no being to yield it to. But where a heart has been moved by the wonders of nature or strivings of God's Spirit, to study and accept revelation, and has been so shown the suitability and sufficiency of Christ's atonement to meet its desperate need

as to induce its acceptance of the truth, then grateful love can doubt no more on any point; an unanswerable, irresistible, albeit unseen, power having mercifully revealed Jesus, it can never leave that Saviour's side more, never question any of the truths He declares; henceforth its belief is identical with the Lord's utterances; His word becomes its *vade mecum*.

May God the Spirit now graciously help us clearly to understand this written description of His mind, which we, dear reader, as professors of love to Him, are bound to examine into and make our own! for faith, to be saving, is not of that dead kind which devils, and, alas! many others have,—mere conviction of facts, without seeing to it that they make any effect on themselves; but it is the ruling the conduct and affections in accordance to the demand made by that conviction. Even as disobedience to one command places under condemnation, so the non-acceptance of any one truth may either hinder salvation or sanctification. But the called are required to confess and love all things declared to be the will of God.

Turning, therefore, to the law and to the gospel, the believer clasps to his heart these fundamental articles of belief and commands for obedience. That there is but one God, who is everlasting, sinless, omniscient, omnipresent; that, in Him, three persons are united, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that these three in one, together made the world and every creature therein; that when the man, made by them very good and happy, sinned and drew down righteous condemnation upon himself, the Triune God mercifully planned a way by which He could be just and yet the justifier of sinners; that, in the fulness of time, God the Son took human nature upon

Him, and lived thirty-three years on earth as a poor man, a preacher of a new dispensation, and then voluntarily underwent the agonies of crucifixion, that by His death man might be redeemed from the power of death; the third day He rose again, thus testifying the completeness of His victory, and, after a few days spent on earth, to witness His resurrection unto those who had known Him of old, He ascended into heaven, where He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, making intercession for His people. The sinner, who has found pardon, is commanded unquestioningly to believe all this, though there is much in these truths far beyond human comprehension,—so much, that in all ages of the Church there have been very many grievously tempted to doubt, through trying to reason about that which is unsearchable, very many who have shut themselves out of the pale of hope by altogether refusing that which can only in part be understood here. God promises that when faith has done its work of glorifying Him, then He will explain all things unto His people, but, until then, we must trust; no searching can lay bare to finite comprehension the mystery of the Trinity in unity, of the temporary permission of evil. Love is content to lay by all questionings into these deep things, until God wills to make them plain, and is satisfied that they are true because He says so in whose word it is perfectly sure. Each truth has precious comfort and joy to offer, and the believer accepts all thankfully, and, in humble, admiring affection, strives so to study each as to gain a higher appreciation of its worthiness.

Yet more than this does the pardoned child accept as part of his belief; even the assurance of Scripture as to the new blessed position into which he has been

brought towards this God; that, washed and made clean from every sin in the precious blood of Jesus Christ, He has been accepted of the Father, who now owns him as His son; that the Holy Spirit now dwells in his heart, purifying its desires and habits, leading it again and again to wash, for each freshly-incurred transgression, in the blood of the Saviour, and training it up meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; that now he is one with God, indissolubly grafted into the Vine; that in himself he is nothing but sin and weakness, but that, in dependence on the Lord, he is strong; that as he has been forgiven the past, so the work begun will be completed in him, and, amidst godlessness, idolatry, evil of every kind and degree, he will be guarded safe from infection; that it is the Spirit alone that quickeneth; that not so much as one Christian grace could unfold without His gracious influence; that life is only through Him; that he is never alone; that the Head of the Church fulfils His promise, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you; lo, I am with you alway;" that either affliction shall pass over him when visiting the ungodly, and he shall be delivered from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence; from the terror by night, and the arrow that flieth by day; from the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noon-day; from all evil, and every plague and danger; or else that chastening shall come to him only as the token of a Father's love and careful training, of His untiring trouble with His wayward, unholy ones; that thus, as the pillar of cloud by day, and fire by night, varied phases of discipline alike work for his eternal weal; that prayer is the link raising him to God, who through the Spirit, the Scriptures, nature, and providences, holds intercourse back with

him; that in prayer he wields, through faith, the mightiest weapon in the world; that he is ever heard, ever answered, though the manner of according the request is chosen by Him whose love, guided by perfect wisdom, perfect knowledge, can never err, but always does that really most advantageous for His people; that all things work together for good to him; that all his need, earthly as well as spiritual, shall be supplied; that, once in Christ, he can never die; that yet he stands only by faith, through grace, and may fall; that his duty is, living in God, and by God, and communing ever with Him, and striving continually to keep his heart a holy temple dedicated to Him, to learn as much as he can of all things, spiritual and secular, from all men and all things; that he is to live for others, and keep the telling forth of the Gospel message to all men as the chief aim of his life; that nothing happens by chance, but that the venture in human estimation is the fore-ordained plan of God; that thoughts and power are alone of Him, man proposing, but God disposing; that all must pass hence to judgment, either through the grave, or caught up to meet the Lord at His coming; but that death's shafts will soon be exhausted, and that, like the Lord, all shall rise again, some to everlasting life, some to eternal shame and misery; that eternity, unseen, wondrous, beyond power of conception, will never pass away; that nothing will lessen the period of its existence, no deductions reduce it, but that, when ages shall have rolled past, vast, incomprehensible eternity will be as near its beginning, as far from its ending, as ever; that, like a circle, it has no commencement or finish; that God shall be glorified for ever in both the lost and saved.

These things love believes, and in them it finds rest,

and soothing comfort, and triumphant joy. The soul is here satisfied; it has found God; enough; it is promised a fuller revelation, perfection, and rejoicing, and it is content to wait a little longer for them; since, in God, henceforth are wrapt up the believer's desires, his interests are identical with those of Him who shall reign alone and over all; and, therefore, he need know no fear, he can know no disappointment. He remains evermore under the shadow of the cross, and abides confident in the city of refuge. He trusts in his God, in His friendship, in His presence, in His guardianship; and feels "His left hand is under my head; and His right hand doth embrace me;" that Elder Brother's whisper of peace makes silence around sweeter than the earthly tones most charming, and sheds on the din of life's track a halo of heavenly brightness. If the Lord is the Shepherd, the sheep can know no want; He maketh to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth beside the still waters; or, if rougher discipline be needed, He Himself shall prove "a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, rivers of water in a dry place, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," "a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy, in his distress;" "He will cause waters to break out in the wilderness, and streams in the desert," "to give drink to His people, His chosen;" He will support and strengthen the sinking frame, breathe precious assurances midst irreparable bereavements, give joy of soul to the agonised tabernacle, and hope and trust to the spirit wrung with torturing fears. Thus the child of God is enabled, from truthful personal experience, to stamp his assurance, "It is well," "It is sweet," on every passing scene, event, and time; for he knows the blessed, calming, satisfying, joy-giving fact, that what seems

accident is in reality the working out of God's fixed designs, all of which are dictated by love.

This assurance gives also double weight to the warnings of the Bible, in the believer's estimation; for He who is true in one point keeps also unswerving verity in all others; and as surely as the blessing follows the washed, and sanctified, and obedient, the curse follows the despisers of the covenant, the unbelievers, the disobedient; hence, the deeper a Christian's loving faith towards God, the deeper also his fear of offending Him, his reverence, his awe, his intense yearning solicitude for the souls of others. In proportion as he values the joys of glory will he dread the pangs of hell, and be constrained to warn sinners from the brink of the yawning precipice overhanging irretrievable perdition.

But, ere passing to the study of the effect towards mankind of loving faith Godward, let us turn to a warning of Scripture, hinting at a most important Christian truth. In recapitulating the sins of Jerusalem, for which she deserved judgment, God avers that "she received not correction;"[1] now, a study of her history proves that this word "received" did not signify that she had gone without affliction; and if we turn to the whole world, of which Jerusalem stands in revelation as a type, one glance convinces us of the same fact there. The world is full of vanity, cruel disappointments, empty voids, deceitful mirages; it is filled with sick, sorrowing, bereaved, remorseful, agonising creatures; the whole creation groaneth; even the new-born babe is subject to pain and want; through more or less tribulation of body and bitterness of spirit, all pass on their journey through life. Then what signifies this momentous word "received?" Reader, when

[1] Zeph. iii. 2.

oppressed with physical or mental pain, have you ever thought on it—ever examined whether you were being under suffering so "exercised" as afterward to receive from and through it the peaceable fruit of righteousness? At first the lesson taught here seems beyond creature grasp, yet love struggles after it, and when it is learnt, the unruffled peace, the inextinguishable joy, it gives, are a reward beyond the sinner's power of comprehension.

The word "received," then, signifieth not endured; since sin has brought a universal blight, and none can avoid its wages of pain, none can shun death successfully, nor escape the doom, the heritage, of anguish. But what does it express? Love accepts correction, takes it as a gift, is as thankful for it as for gladness, recognises its need-be, esteems chastening a token of the Schoolmaster's interest and pains with His pupil, blesses the Hand that smites, is exceeding joyful in all tribulation.

God demands this faith, this implicit confidence, this unswerving trust. Having given, having sacrificed, having raised, having exalted, His Son for man's sake, He asks of the sinner in return, not only faith towards the appointed Saviour, but faith in the loving motives of all His other lesser providences. If "la lumière est un don de ses mains," les ténèbres ne le sont-ils pas aussi? If, in the gifts, He desires us to remember the Giver, does He not also say, "Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it?" If He feeds His people with plenteousness of gladdening mercies, does not He also feed them with sorrows? Therefore the loving child opens his mouth continually in obedience to the command, and accepts with equal gratitude the luscious fruit and the bitter herb, the sparkling waters and the bitter draught; realising that the giving of either betokens an all-wise, an

all-loving Father's delight in doing him good; thus that Father would bind to Himself, by enriching with gladness, or by displaying earth's unsatisfying transitory nature, the sinner's vileness, some hidden idol, His own fulness, or attuning the experience of the disciple to that of the Captain of His salvation.

Thank God! many have been enabled thus to testify to the sufficiency of grace, through loving faith, to give deep, thrilling joy where all around spoke bitterness to the eye and estimation of sense. May this point in love's character be strengthened in us, through the example of those who through faith and patience now inherit the promises!

Loving faith overcomes the fear of death, and the sting of its partings. William and Sophia L—— had been married but a few months, when the young husband was summoned, with his regiment, to assist in quelling the Indian mutiny, where he was early taken off by cholera. Till lately he had lived a godless life, and to within a few hours of death the memory of the past, and self-mistrust for the future, had made him a humble Christian rather than a joyful one; but, as death stole on, the prospect of never again grieving the Lord he loved filled his soul with deepest thankfulness; fear of death never entered his thoughts,—how could it, since the blood had covered all the sin?—and he had "but one little step to take, and then holiness for ever." He who had done so much in forgiving him would assuredly bear him across Jordan: "I'm clinging to the Rock; I'm so glad I shall see Him so soon!"

A friend suggested, "But what will your poor wife do; have you no thought for her?"

"Why, if God is true, and I have found Him so, to His promises, He will as much keep one word with me

as another; I have looked, and He saved me; I have trusted, and He has took away my fear to die; I leave Him my wife, and He will preserve her."

"But she does not know nor love the Lord?"

"But He will make my widow trust in Him." And in this child-like confidence he quietly, happily passed into the rest that remaineth.

His faith received its reward, for the crushing blow of bereavement, and his transmitted Bible, brought her to the trust he had sought for her. The conviction that he was only sleeping in Jesus, that they yet should be united again, strengthened her to joy amidst her loneliness. Though depressed sometimes with the fear that heaven promised joy to her too much for her husband's sake, her glad exclamation often was, "Bless the holy name of my Lord and Saviour, I am not alone!" "I feel very sorry for having given way to sorrow so much for him who is so happy in Jesus, and at home." "My watchword is looking unto Jesus; in that dear Name I trust; I do not wish any single thing altered in my lot, for I know He has done all things well; I do love Him, my precious Saviour; sometimes He does make me feel so very happy; I wish I could always feel so happy." "I am happier a great deal than I used to be when things went smooth, though I am not so gay and giddy now."

"It's a joy that can bear looking into," said an aged woman, oppressed with dropsy and asthma; "in my old days, as soon as I felt happy, I began to look out for a sorrow; as soon as we got things straight and a little above want, I knew it would not last; and, oh, the thought of eternity would have made any joy dark! I knew I had sinned; I had little enough on earth to live for, true enough, but for all that I wouldn't look above. But now,

though I have often not even a crust, not a bit of flannel to put on, and hardly able to move, with a deaf and unkind husband, who used to be different to me once upon a time, now, why I'm happy all the day and all the night! I never want for company. It's good to be alone, good to have to cry, good to bear pain, for it brings Jesus into the room, and it's worth anything to have a call from such a Doctor. Oh, yes! the few who knew my outer troubles may well pity me, but I'm better off than I ever was; as I said, mine's a joy that can bear looking into, for (raising her glowing eyes heavenward, with clasped hands), thanks be unto Thee, dear, precious Lord! it can never, *never* be taken away—never taken away; but Thou wilt give me more, much more of it!"

Loving faith expects the supply of all temporal necessities, and an answer to every petition. Jehovah-jireh; the Lord will provide. "He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine He shall deliver thee from death; and in war from the power of the sword. At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh. Thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field; and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee. And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace." "I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground; and will make them to lie down safely." "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them;" "there is no want to them that fear Him;" "they that seek Him shall not want any good thing." Such promises are faith's bulwark, its anchor of hope, for the fulfilment of which past mercies give an assurance.

There was a young Christian dressmaker in America, who, having been a long time out of employment, was reduced to want, and in her extremity betook herself to prayer, asking that He who had cared for her soul would now provide for her poor body, and bring her some employment before the day was out. About ten o'clock in the morning her prayer was answered, but in such a way as only to bring new perplexities and trials.

An actress, about to fill a new engagement, entered her room, bringing the materials for her costumes, and began to give instructions as to the making up of them. The dressmaker, being exceedingly conscientious as to the purposes for which they were to be used, told her that if she would wait a few minutes she would consult her Father as to whether such employment were lawful; and, then and there in her presence, she knelt and audibly addressed the Lord. In a few moments the astonished actress was struck with conviction, and crying out, that she was "lost, lost," threw herself on her knees beside the other woman in perfect agony of mind.

The result was that the order was countermanded, her resolution fixed never more to appear on the stage, and the engagement consequently broken. In three weeks more her name was enrolled among the true followers of Jesus. Before that day closed also legitimate work was granted the young dressmaker.

"For whom is that pillow?" asked a native servant of a visitor to an Indian hospital, with evident wonder and earnestness. "For the poor little sick boy in the ward." The native clasped his hands, "Well then, your God must be a hearer of prayer, for the child has been so bad all night; his poor head is tender, and he has been longing for something soft for it, and a clean white

cover; and he told me he had been asking God about it." Passing on, the visitor approached the dying boy's bed. "Thank thee, dear kind Lord, I knew you would grant my prayer; thank Thee so much for Thy gift." Then turning to his visitor, he continued, with a beaming smile, "I thank Him first, for I know He told you what I wanted, but thank you too for troubling for me."

Loving faith is content even in the prospect of bereavement, sorrow, want, pain, spiritual temptations; to all these flesh is heir, and from them the believer is not exempt; not always is it his Father's will to remove the cup, or grant the request, but always it is His will to support the failing heart and sinking frame, to set the bow in the cloud, to place a silver lining round the darkest troubles. Ever the language of the trusting heart is, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines: the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." From anticipatory fears he finds immediate duty a refuge: "as thy days, so shall thy strength be," is support enough for him; one step only he takes at a time; to that he gives his whole attention; and he unhesitatingly thus proceeds without fears, without exciting alarms.

A dear little child had for months been confined to one posture: in constant suffering, the footfall in an adjacent room, the approach of any one to his bedside, was agony to the wrung nerves; for some time all hope of recovery had been given up, at least all hope of his being ever

anything but a fearful cripple. To this prospect grace had taught him not only gentle but glad submission. But it was at length proposed that further medical advice should be obtained; and the child caught some idea of the possibility of an operation. At first nature shrank; tears filled the sufferer's eyes; might it not pass from him? Hours passed, the child was left alone with his God. "Well, my child," he was afterwards asked again, "may I send Dr. —— to see you? perhaps nothing will have to be done; but are you willing to hear his opinion?" "Yes, quite; I've been praying for trust, for, oh, my poor heart does tremble! I can't help it quite; but what you read to me of the martyrs seeming to feel no pain in the fire has helped me so much. Not that I think I shouldn't feel if the doctors did anything to me, but I think Jesus would stand by me; and He wouldn't let the furnace heat be too great — only enough to burn the sin out of me. I've got a promise against the time, 'Thou shalt hide me in the secret of Thy presence.' And, oh, I know He will; He'll hide me, He'll keep me still, that I may glorify Him!"

Loving faith traces God's providence in every so-called accident of life, in every circumstance, every meeting, every conversation. Beautifully is this conviction expressed by Joseph, in an effort to give confidence to his unkind brothers. "Now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves; for God did send me before you to preserve life: so now it was not you that sent me hither, but God."

Some years ago there lived in Frankfort, in Germany, a wealthy man, who yet was not rich toward God. He had been several times shipwrecked, but his heart was unsubdued, and he was so far from praising the Lord for His goodness, that he absolutely refused to converse on

spiritual subjects, or to receive a visit from a minister of the Gospel. He, however, was not happy. Often he felt restless, unsatisfied with his worldly portion, longing for something he had not. In this state of mind he got his Bible one evening, and began to read. A passage attracted his attention, but he could not understand it. Greatly excited, he would not pass it over, but longed for a teacher who could explain it to him. His mind went through the theologians of the town, and recalling especially an eminent minister, named Domaire, he wondered how he could get an interview with him.

Just then his door-bell rang, and in his agitation he waited not for the servant, but opened the door himself. Mr. Domaire stood before him! Personally strangers, what had led the pastor there? He was intending to call on a friend in the same street, whose house he knew well, but, from absence of mind, he went to the wrong door. God had thus guided the servant to where he was needed, and the blessed result was that the instructions then given led the rich man to Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

> "When we are not where we would be,
> And dearest friends are set afar,
> The thought that 'tis Thy ruling will—
> The thought that Thou art with us still—
> Nearer than ear or eye can know—
> Art with us still, in life or death,
> In blooming life, or failing breath,
> 'Tis all of heaven we need below."

Loving faith works in confident expectation of winning souls, midst seen or unseen success. "I have not, to my own knowledge, been the instrument of converting one single soul," was the dying utterance of an aged

believer, "but I have no doubt of a rich reward when I enter His presence; apparent failure has never disheartened me, for I am confident that many a glorious surprise awaits me; the Lord has promised to make His word effectual, and from early youth He has kept my heart disposed to minister of it. Therefore I have ever sown and ploughed in joy; and now, though I have no fruit to show my Master, as the result of a lent life and opportunities, I believe He has some to show me; for the promise that has been my staff shall be my glory, 'your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'"

Thus love believeth all things told of God, and believeth also that each dispensation speaks His love; its posture is ever that of rest, confidence, holy joy. Is it ours, beloved reader? Know we the perfect love which casteth out fear—the undoubting, unalterable confidence in His word, in His goodness, in our own safety, in our own everlasting blessedness? Love is imperfect when such faith is wanting, therefore let our prayer ever be, Lord, increase our faith; and let our effort ever be to subdue fear, and attain to confidence.

"Mortal! however dark the cloud
Thou seest hanging overhead;
However long, and deep, and loud,
The waters round thee spread;
However lonely be thy lot,
However desolate the spot
Where thou art doomed to dwell;
Remember, thou art ne'er forgot,
God doeth all things well:
He knows thy frame, and what is best
To call forth all thy latent power,
And so He gives thee toil or rest,
The sunshine or the shower;
He gives thee good, He takes away;

He knows the weakness of thy clay,
Thy strength proportions to thy day;
And though thou mayst not tell
On earth why thou must furl thy tent
So often,—why thy heart is rent,
And the reed snapped on which thou leant,—
Have faith, pass on, and be content;
God doeth all things well."[1]

And now we come to the consideration of the effect of heavenly love towards the creature. Here, again, love believeth all things. In the first place, the believer thinks well of all; until the fact of evil-doing is brought indisputably to his knowledge, he overlooks all that is infirm, unpleasing, blameable. Delighting to praise and admire, he is searching ever for traits revealing the workmanship of God; for any attribute, or expression, or ability which shall help to raise his heart and mind, and bring him nearer the Creator. Thus he sees in courtesy a love which excites his warm reciprocation; he never dreams himself of, or allows to be admitted to him, interested motives as its cause, or the probability that the affable one is so only to some, and at certain times. He esteems peculiarities no bar to his affection and respect, recognising in variety a material which his God shall work hereafter into spotless beauty. He accepts a profession of love of good works, zeal, spirituality of mind, and makes much of all that has a shadow of good in it; even tracking the smallest spark in a dark character. With open arms he welcomes all who claim kindred in Christ, and, whatever their infirmities, however much they may naturally grate on his sense of what is attractive, he will cling to them, and deem their motives and spirit right, when outwardly they seem wanting.

[1] Fletcher.

The pure in heart are less ready to accuse others than those who are self-ignorant and proud; men judge by the reflection of themselves, by the touchstone of their own experience, as a general rule; an evil conscience is constantly supposing it sees its duplicate in every other; but a heart set upon following the Lord, and walking in His commandments, knowing the sinfulness, the weaknesses, the hindrances of its own life, has compassion on others, and keenly appreciates everything lovely, which bespeaks to him a struggle against nature, or a higher natural state than his own; and where it marks sin it remembers its own falls, and, at least, gives the sinner credit for sorrow for the same. Thus, in all circumstances, it believes its fellows worthy of esteem and loving sympathy. When fault is found with the believer, and an error or defect is pointed out in him, meekly he accepts the correction, assured of its having good ground, and of the corrector's pure, disinterested aim, in giving it. His love being sincere, he reads literally the kindly professions of others, and admits no thoughts of counterfeit or dissimulation on their part; and as most men show their best side, or, at least, try so to speak and act as to win admiration, he discovers in mankind much in which he can delight. Finding in his nature an aptitude to criticise, and, with avidity, at times unconsciously, to see a mote in a brother's eye, he sets ever a guard on himself, and strives, wherever he marks outward failure, to believe that there is an inward repentance, an unwilling yielding to sin, or, perhaps, purity of heart from thought or consciousness of evil in the thing alleged. Towards the children of God such faith should be specially exercised, since they are doubly His by creation and redemption, and thus peculiarly the objects of

His careful attention. Too often jealousy mars this grace, but the love that believeth all things ought to be shown those heartily who shall certainly be soon without blemish; who have such a scrupulous set of rules for their guidance; such a holy, such a perfect, such a loving Master!

Again and again has trust in Christians been evidenced by those who had no love for, who paid no obedience to, their tenets. Mr. B——, a talented young man, was chief clerk in a bank of Virginia. Superior in character and attainments, he yet had nearly succeeded in throwing from his mind the last shackles of what he used to call the "nursery of superstition," the religion his pious mother had taught him, and was now leader of an infidel club. On one occasion upwards of a hundred thousand dollars in bank bills had to be carried to Kentucky, and he was selected to carry them. As he was obliged to pass through a part of the country said to be infested with robbers and murderers, he arranged to pass it in the day-time. But he took the wrong road, and having lost himself, was glad to find a shelter anywhere. He rode about a long time in the forest, amid the darkness and coldness of a starless October night.

At length he saw a dim light, and making straight for it, came to a wretched-looking log-cabin. He knocked and was admitted by a woman, who told him that she and her children were alone; her husband had gone out hunting, but would be back soon. She gave him supper, and proposed his retiring to bed; but, in dread of his life and his charge, perhaps in the house of one of those highwaymen whose name was the terror of the country, he dared not rest, but took out his pistols, examined the priming, and determined to sell his life as dear as he could.

Presently the man came in. He was rather a fierce, uncouth-looking hunter, wearing a dirty skin hunting-shirt, and bear-skin cap, evidently fatigued, and in no very talkative mood. He, too, urged the infidel to retire, who again declined, declaring his intention of sitting up by the fire all night. He was terribly frightened, expecting this would be his last night on earth; his infidel principles gave him no comfort; his fears grew into a perfect agony.

At length the rough backwoodsman rose, and reaching over his hand to a little shelf, took down an old book, saying, "Well, stranger, if you won't go to bed, I will, but it is my custom always to read a chapter out of God's word before I go to bed." A load was at once removed from the infidel's mind. He felt that the man who kept an old Bible in his house, and read it, and bent his knees before his Maker, would do him no harm. He listened to the prayer of the hunter, at once dismissed his fears, and, lying down, slept as calmly as if he had been under his father's roof. From that day he ceased to revile the Bible; in after years he became a Christian.

If a child of the world thus estimated and trusted the force of Gospel principle, how much more should they who know more of its leavening, purifying, ennobling virtue, believe in its healing, and consequent necessarily sanctifying, effect on all who are partakers of it! Dear reader, let us struggle to realise that every human being is as a piece of ground, sown and kept alike of God and Satan; for the glory of Him we love, for His joy's sake, let us magnify and highly esteem, and vaunt ourselves of, His sovereignty and power, and look for manifestations of it in all; let us love to think that He may be gaining vic-

tories where there is yet no clamour of arms, no triumphant booming of cannon!

Love believeth all things; be ours that faith now, that ours may be the sight hereafter; trust in God, and trust in man; vaunting of God, and charitable esteeming of men!

O Thou who askest of Thy people such things only as Thou hast first Thyself bestowed on them, grace for grace; grant unto us, we beseech Thee, such love unto Thee, that we may unfeignedly trust in the spotless beauty of Thy perfections, and in all Thy dispensations, whether of sunshine or shadow; and also may, for Thy name's sake, love, cherish, and honour all men, specially those whom Thou art training for glory, for the sake of Jesus. Amen.

CHAPTER XIV.

"The Lord will gather up His jewels, won
From earth, and yet not earthly; sharpest griefs
And trials here will but have given to each
A polished brightness; that, celestial light
Reflecting from a thousand points, the gems
May sparkle with a radiance worthy heaven!
There will be souls that glow with ardent zeal,
As Cephas, when beside the lake's still shore
He bent in presence of his Saviour,—Lord,
Thou knowest all things, knowest that I love!
Such, like the ruby, cast a fervent ray,
A glowing brightness, on the cold world round.
And as the emerald and sapphire drink
The same pure light, yet shine with varied hues,
There will be spirits differing, yet alike,
As Martha and as Mary: lovely both,
But one reflecting back the tints of earth,
And one the azure of th' ethereal sky.
One lives *for* God, the other lives *in* God:
Both tread the self-same path, but *this* with eye
Oft turned to earth, *that* riveted on heaven!—
And God hath other jewels."

A. L. O. E.

CHARITY HOPETH ALL THINGS.

Hope of Personal Salvation — Hope of increased and perfected Joy — Hourly Advent Expectation — Till He come — No Sin — God's Plan of Uncertainty — Waiting for Jesus — A Word for Seekers after Daily Advent Hopes — The Anti-climax — Believers work for Souls in Hope — Till I miss you — A City Missionary's Sabbath Morning's Work — The Christian hopes for evident Sanctification in his Brethren — The Believer's Hope in all that is great in Science and Art — The Last Step in History — Hopes bearing on Judgments.

HOPE is a wishful expectation, a looking forward to a something which gives a promise of attainment, a desire for something hidden, or, at any rate, not yet obtained, a wrestling at times against appearances, a trusting in spite of fear.

There are two points on which a believer's hope is chiefly exercised; his own salvation, and the eternal safety of others. The first amounts to a confidence almost beyond the limits of hope; in that, if any one looks to the cross of Jesus, with faith in His power to heal, and, in grateful remembrance of forgiveness received, strives henceforth to walk in His ways, he knows that he can never perish — that his Head must fall ere one of the least of the flock shall be lost. In our sure word of prophecy, the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure, the promise is, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away;" the bow after rain, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, all testify to the

truthfulness of all God has said shall be; and, therefore, though infirmities cumber the aspiring soul, and temptations prevail, and sins overcome him, and all hope may at times seem lost, the child is yet borne in the everlasting arms, appointed a seat in the realms of glory, and kept from utter destruction; he may fall, but he shall rise again, for he that once believes in Christ *has* everlasting life.

And yet the believer has hope toward God; for he has not yet finished his work, run his course, done all things; not yet has he entered the land of Canaan; he knows the joy of pardon, of growing sanctification and deepening trust, and blessed and true is his gladness in the tasted experience of these; but is he therewith satisfied? is he content with what is already gained? knows he no further want? Ah, yes! for as yet the rose has its thorns, the future conqueror is yet in the enemy's land, the battle still rages; when he would fain rise into God, he ofttimes is struck down in the dust with sin and shame; when he would forget earth, he is cumbered with cares; when he would joy in God, often he can but cling to Him; when he would walk confidently as His friend, he is driven to Him for a strong habitation, a refuge, a strong tower. Therefore, whilst he joys, he hopes for more, he wishes for more, he confidently expects more; now he walks by faith, he longs to walk in sight of Him he loves; he hopes soon for grace to merge into glory; for the stumbling, uneven walk, to be changed into unfaltering perfection; for the struggling after Christlike attainment amongst difficulties to become unceasing growth in a congenial soil. Blessed he now is; but, oh, much more blessed does he look to be! As yet he is but climbing the hill,

the view is only in little part unfolded, he has but seen enough to make him urge onward; love hopeth still, for how can it be content, absent from the beloved in visible presence? how satisfied, so long as any of His desires remain unfulfilled? any part of His kingdom under the enemy's rule? Love hopeth for all foretold, for the seeing Him face to face, for the day of His victory, for his marriage, for the gathering together of fellow-members, for the eternal dwelling in His house, for its own perfection. Love hopeth now, but the days of hope are passing away; much of the little while has slipped past; the time is at hand. Up, beloved fellow-believer! let us see to it that our lamps and oil are ready; let us seek out and press in to the fold the yet wanderers; let us stand, not each alone, but preparing together the song of welcome. Death is not the end set forth in Revelation, nor the sleeping in Jesus consequent to His ingathered ones. Oh, no! happy as they are who rest in Him, they are not even content yet; still they have an unsatisfied craving; in paradise with Him, they yet look onward; one prayer they can, they do, still join in with the Church militant: "How long, O Lord;" "Thy kingdom come;" hasten Thine Advent; take to Thee Thy great power, and reign. There is selfishness in looking only for the individual call to His presence; love hopeth for what He Himself has pictured as the rightful end to be desired. "I will come again; a little while, and ye shall see me; behold, I come quickly; I will see you again." "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;" waiting as Simeon and Anna, and others of old, for the promised Messiah; this is our favoured calling—are we living up to it?

The world, dreading His coming, hopes the day is far off, and argues, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." And their wilful blindness and pre-occupation too much deaden the hopes of the children. Paul hoped he should have seen the day ere death claimed him; how much more should we, in these later days, look for the fulfilment of the hopes of His coming? True, much foretold *may* yet remain unfulfilled: true, some prophecies may be incompleted! The times are hidden in the Father's knowledge alone; of that day and hour knoweth no man; but, dear reader! things *may* not be so; this reading of prophecy may be incorrect; the promises may be fulfilling now in a way we think not, or in an incredibly short space of time they may be compassed. True, many who love the Lord, and have deeply studied this theme, point onward; but they are finite, and to none has the time been revealed; only the command given to Christians in every age, Watch; the cheering hope, the time is short. Oh, I would urge on you, dear reader, muse on the command and hope, till your whole soul burns with intensest longing for the sound of His trumpet, announcing His coming! Day by day, night by night, hour by hour, let us stand on our watch, and set us on the tower, to catch the first gleams of the dawn of the brightness His Advent shall shed around; of that day which shall see the Lord return to His blood-bought earth, with His glorious company of angels and redeemed. Oh! hope continually; wait ever, watch on, in hope, blessed hope, that shall be fulfilled, though when we may not yet know. Hope always, listen always, do everything in the spirit of hope;

for even though the time may not be just yet, such expectation will give to sorrows a comfort, to labours and love an impetus, will take from the world its false colours, and from bereavements much of the sting. Love hopeth! Oh, would I could convey to each reader all the warmth of eager, expecting hope I feel as I pen it! It so dishonours the Lord to rest content without Him; as we work, as we pray, as we speak, let us listen! "Ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Let the world know us by this hope, this expectation, this setting loose to all things below, this pilgrim character, this vivid sense, that at any moment He may come! And, oh! let all our plans be more arranged with the hopeful reservation, *unless He come*, or *I go to Him;* our present work done heartily, *in case He soon come*, or *soon call me to Him;* our sorrows patiently endured *till He come.*"

"'Till He come!' oh, let the words
Linger on the trembling chords;
Let the little while between
In their golden light be seen;
Let us think how heaven and home
Lie beyond that 'till He come!'

When the weary ones we love
Enter on their rest above,
Seems the earth so poor and vast,
All our life-joy overcast?
Hush, be every murmur dumb,
It is only 'till He come!'

Clouds and conflicts round us press,
Would we have one sorrow less?
All the sharpness of the cross,
All that tells the world is loss,

Death and darkness, and the tomb,
Only whisper, 'Till He come!'

See, the feast of love is spread;
Drink the wine, and break the bread;
Sweet memorials, till the Lord
Call us round His heavenly board,
Some from earth, from glory some,
Severed only 'till He come!'" [1]

How sweet to fall asleep with the last thought, "Perhaps He will Himself awake me to-night with His trumpet!" how cheering to begin the day's work with the hope, "Perhaps He will come to-day!" How should the uncertainty of the time nerve us to be ever at our post, to be ever careful lest we should be caught in the promised moment of change, with an impure word on our lips, an unholy thought in our hearts, occupied, idly, on self or the world! Love hopeth! is ever stretching out the neck to see Him as first He comes in sight, ever is reaching forth unto the joy long deferred, but which shall yet surely come; for the Lord is not slack concerning His promise; behold, He cometh, and this tabernacle must be shortly put off. Wearied with sin within, pained and discouraged by evil without, how does love yearn for the time when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; when never more His power shall be opposed, His will thwarted, His love unrequited; but when all shall bend in lowly adoration before Him, and gladly, perfectly, do His commands; when His ministry shall be the loved employ of each, and to grow in knowledge and godly attainments the untiring effort of all! Now, love has often to mourn

[1] Rev. E. H. Bickersteth.

infirmities of the flesh which overcome the spirit, and a deceitfulness of heart which proves a traitor within the camp; now, often a weak and suffering frame makes active service impossible, and mental labours a failure! But it shall not be so long; soon, and for ever, we shall love as we are loved, and serve with purified, perfected powers, midst an atmosphere of unresting rest. Now sins defile, sometimes presumptuously, sometimes unconsciously; sometimes they are resisted, sometimes yielded to; and, oh! how bitter the consequent remorse for either; but love hopeth! Soon every taint of evil shall have been removed, and without spot, or wrinkle, or any blemish, we shall be to Him who died for us an everlasting glory and joy.

Would we could rightly appreciate this unutterably blessed position — to be for ever with our Lord! for ever like Him! for ever pleasing Him! Pray, pray, beloved reader! that this love may be ours yet more and more, that we may less love and serve earth's vanities, but ever press on, looking upwards! Let us watch, and wait, and pray, and long for Him; let us do all we can, by preparing His way, to hasten His coming; let us hourly make ready for Him, even if hope be disappointed! For, oh! some time He must and will come, at an hour unexpected; for never shall men know when all the prophecies are exactly fulfilled: true, there is a special blessing promised the studiers of prophecy, but let each remember that there is a vagueness about it which God would not have presumptuously changed into fixed data. "He has said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" The word has gone forth, "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night;" and better, far better, for

the watchers to be disappointed, than for any to be found sleeping unprepared. God, who will have all men to be saved, assuredly knew and acted on the most effectual plan of exciting men to take heed to the coming judgment; He does not set death continually before them, true though it be that to the individual death or the Advent are alike the close of his probation, the unalterable stamping of his condition for eternity; but He sets *the Day* forth as the goal to be kept in view; because, doubtless, there is more largeness and grandness of solemnity in the sudden summoning of so many at once; there is something more startling in the possibility of being called, unwarned by sickness, war, or any outward appearances; there is more room for enthusiastic, unconstrained, unceasing effort to draw others to the cross. Love hopeth! Oh, be our hope quickened by truer, more absorbing love! Christian reader, I would lay this theme on your conscience, and entreat you to search the word to see if this incessant watching for the Master's Advent is not scriptural. Oh! rouse up to watch, and long more than ever you have done before, and strive with your whole soul to get others to share your waiting expectation. Let your thoughts be full of His coming, your work leavened, your interests regulated, by the uncertainty, yet hope, concerning the time. Together, shoulder to shoulder, let us stand, and strive, through lent grace, to make ready a people prepared to welcome Him. Let us earnestly set ourselves to this work, and send forth the tidings, "Behold, the Lord cometh," through the length and breadth of the earth; that when He we love comes, He may have a glad reckoning, a blissful multitude trusting in His merits; that we may

see His beloved face radiant with joy, and have the glad conviction that we have been helpers thereunto. Even so, come Lord Jesus!

"Waiting for Jesus! Father, I stand,
Longing to mount up to yonder bright land,
Where Him in His glory unveiled I shall see,
And for ever from sin and from sorrow be free.

Waiting for Jesus! my soul knows no doubt,
My mountain of sin is all blotted out;
His blood is on me, my pardon is sealed,
My sentence of death Himself hath repealed.

Waiting for Jesus! for the glimpses on earth
Of His love and His beauty, His infinite worth,
Make me long to behold Him, with no veil between,
Where I'll share all His glory, on whom I now lean.

Waiting for Jesus! for sweet though it be
To climb up life's hill, with my steps stayed on Thee,
Oh! what will it be when, my journeyings o'er,
I find in Thy presence rest and peace evermore?

Waiting for Jesus! listening to hear
The sound of the trumpet announce He is near;
Nightly and daily I look and I pray
For the summons to meet Him—His great Advent day.

Waiting for Jesus! Father, I pray,
Teach all Thine own children Thy word to obey;
Go forth in the world, making ready my way,
That so may be hastened Thy blessed Advent day.

Waiting for Jesus! I long so to see
The visage that once was so marred, Lord, for me;
With a heart freed from sin, to love and to praise,
For ever with rapture on Thy glory to gaze."

One word ere passing on to the many dear fellow-believers who say, as many have said to me, "Oh, for that daily hope! I cannot get it; how shall I do so?" I believe all we want for its attainment is simply more love. If a dear friend is expected after long absence, how we look and listen long before the appointed hour! how we start at any noise, fancying we detect the form, or hear the voice we love! So, if our hearts are set upon the Lord, if the one prevailing passion is buried in Him, we shall intuitively wait for Him, think of Him, long for Him. Let us ask for more love, then we shall obtain likewise more hope.

Love hopeth all things; for the Master's and his own sake, we have seen, the believer wishes still, is yet unsatisfied; now let us mark how hope is a like attendant of love, when the question is the exercise of the latter towards the creature.

And here I would say, that the Rev. Edward Henry Bickersteth considers that this, and the preceding and succeeding clauses, "believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," form "an anti-climax in the supposed brother; he goes from worse to worse, his conduct is less and less Christlike. But it is a climax in the one who lovingly suffers wrong; first believing, then hoping, then enduring; the love being put to an ever severer test, but still holding on and holding out; his conduct is more Christlike, until it is added, "love never faileth." Love believeth all things; takes a brother at his word, freely, frankly, giving him credit for sincerity. But this frank confidence may be rudely disturbed, so that it is impossible to have that heart-rest in another whose conduct distresses you; then, love hopeth all things; hopes against hope, in spite of things which look dark;

puts the most favourable construction possible upon all things, and thus overcomes evil with good; but, haply, that other continues to distress and to vex, and now love endureth all things; she has nothing else to do, no other course open, but that of patient long-suffering. And this may often conquer when the believeth and the hopeth have failed."

Love hopeth all things; it never yields desire nor expectation of a sinner's ultimate safety; it ploughs in hope, it intercedes with hope, it has hope in the labours of others; it wishes good *for* all, and *in* all; it looks to the redeeming points of character—to the almighty, renewing, transforming power of the alone Worker unto salvation.

The chief hope of the believer regarding his fellowmen is, that all may look to the cross of Christ; many times he is discouraged by many things. Here is one on whom unseen things seem to have no impression; the world, its cares, its pleasures, its necessities, its vanities, leave room for nought beside. Time after time the message seems delivered in yain; but love cannot, dare not, weary; its beloved Saviour died for that soul; if possible, it must be snatched as a brand from the burning. Such a case was that of Lady ——. Her pastor had striven from time to time to win her from the world to which she had wedded her heart: from girlhood she was changing into maturer age, surrounded now by her own grown-up daughters. Deeply attractive, and perfect in the eyes of all, save those who look for a recognition of their Master, she had moved in an incessant round of gaiety and luxury, and still her charms languished not, nor did her zest for the world fail. Much prayer and effort had the good minister made, and faithfully had he

ofttimes striven to make her feel that these vanities were dragging her down to eternal ruin. Again and again had he left her house, faint yet pursuing, cast down, yet not one whit less anxious and determined to hope and strive on, for he was a true shepherd, and neglected none of his flock, though he had to pass through much trial in so ministering. Years had passed since first he had known Lady ——, and she seemed to the eye of sense further removed than ever from the entrance to the fold, yet his hope was answered. At a ball, in the midst of its giddy excitement, its crowd of pleasure-lovers, its gay and healthful votaries, the words of her minister, spoken some years before, as he stood on the step of her carriage, came back with a force she could not resist: "I shall never cease to hope for you, till I miss you amongst the multitude who shall be gathered for ever to the home where pleasures pass not away." "Passing away!" she thought; "all these glad things passing away! I, my children, these thoughtless people—where to? oh! where to? Oh! not to where he will be—he will miss us there. But he spoke of hope! O God! I thank Thee for hope; give me the hope he has." And she became henceforth a learner in the school of Christ, and doubtless has met the pastor in the realms of glory.

This hope nerves the missionary, to leave home, kindred, friends, and country, and go to uncivilised lands and tell their people of the hope beyond the grave; or, amongst the ruffianly, godless poor of his own country. This hope engages the labours of all who are Christ's in some field or other; everywhere they are likely to meet with opposition, often little apparent result, but the chance is worth anything; nay, it is not chance, for the promise is passed that the word they give forth shall

prosper, whether or not they see the fruit here; be it given soon or delayed. If one will not receive it another may; and love labours on in hope; in the morning it sows the seed, and in the evening withholds not his hand, knowing not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

Braced with this hope of love, a city missionary went one Sabbath to the house of a Deist: he had been often before, and as often been repulsed. On this occasion he found him and his men at work in the shop. "The man flew to the door in a rage, and threatened to punch the missionary's head, then ordering him off, banged the door. One of his men also came out, abused him, tore the tract in pieces, and threw it in his face." Thus far hope was disappointed, but He that maketh the wrath of man to praise Him made this noisy opposition the means of attracting to the spot those who should hear and be saved. Many gathered round, most of them sabbath-breakers, with their baskets full of the goods they had just purchased, to whom the missionary spoke. "One man, to whom he addressed a few pointed remarks, had a bundle of cabbages tied up in his handkerchief. He said, 'I have not bought these, but as I have no work, and nothing to eat, I have been out to beg them for dinner.' A gentleman who was standing by said, 'If that is your reason for not attending public worship, I will give you a dinner, if you will go home with me.' The man took him at his word, went with him to church, and then to dinner. In the afternoon the missionary called at his house, where he had several times previously sought to gain admittance, but the wife always refused him and his tracts, saying there were others that needed them more than she did. This time, however, he was gladly

welcomed, and husband and wife joined him in prayer. A few days after a woman asked him, "Sir, are you not the person who was insulted in —— Lane? my mother wants particularly to see you;" and the old woman's soul was given him.

The believer works in hope, for to him has been revealed somewhat of the exceeding and boundless mercy of God, which can change the sinner into the saint, the persecutor into the martyr; and which, where sin has abounded, makes grace much more to abound. Jacob, Manasseh, and Saul, are examples only out of the innumerable cases saved by His goodness, whose whole scheme of redemption bespeaks His hope, if one may so speak, of His mercy leading to repentance. He knew that many would not receive His message, yet He sent His prophets lest any would believe and be saved: and the same principle actuates His people still; not knowing when men will hear, nor when they will forbear, hope strives ever to be working midst often painful waiting.

And love hopes, if for the salvation of outcasts, still more for the sanctification of believers; it desires to see the Lord faithfully imaged in all and each; and for this it waits; painful as much is in the character and ways of the brethren, if but a germ of the true plant be visible, it is content patiently to pray and help towards increasing perfection. It makes allowance for difficulties within and without; it bears with yet unhallowed tempers, expecting their gradual subjection; it watches eagerly to see more and more likeness to the Master attained; it longs unsatisfied, till each has attained fulness of joy and perfection.

Love hopeth all things; it thinks the best of all, it makes the most of every good point; where it marks,

unwillingly, present failure, it desires to see a blessed change; it never admits the suggestion of a bad motive for a good action. Love desires to see the happiness and beauty of God multiplied in His creatures, and, be they converted or not, delights to witness any reflected good in them. This grace will find no room for exercise above, for there all will be clearly known, and "hope that is seen is not hope;" let us therefore make the most of the present discipline afforded by the uncertainty of another's worthiness; it gives opportunity for meekness, forbearance, kindly effort, and hope. There is blessed resemblance to the Lord Jesus, where a heart fears sin in another, as in itself; where the conviction of it is painful; where it would give anything to be mistaken!

Reader! let us never rest till this charitable hope be formed in us; till we unselfishly find a real joy in seeing another excel; till we put off judgment of evil until fact forces it on us. Then shall the love which softens the colouring of the greatest faults in favourite friends cast its own gentle tint also on all men; hope shall brighten the darkest picture, and give gentleness, and yet vigour, to our every intercourse with fellow-creatures. When appearances are unprepossessing, then love shall abound, for soon we shall know each other perfectly, and then we shall regret ever having had an unkind thought of those who are either fellow-heirs, or whose eternal misery is suffering enough without our having added thereto.

How beautiful is the power of expressing thought, whether by breath or hand! Yet how apt are Christians to turn away despisingly from the treasures of art and science, esteeming them of the world, unsanctified, and time spent on them wasted. But, beloved reader! to the pure all things are pure, and the disciples ought

not to condemn that which their Master has not condemned, if it be true, and good, and high. True, the workers of art, the thinkers of noble things, the breathers of sublime melodies, may be unholy; but he that has the love of God in his heart, and the praise of God as his dearest desire, will, even if such human imperfection be the case, *hope* that some small remnant or kindling of heavenly wisdom abides in the sorely-defiled tabernacle, and, in ignorance of the character of the genius, will unreservedly reckon him to be God-inspired. How deeply the recognition of the mind of God in the workmanship of man enhances the interest and goodliness to the observer, only His loving children know. To them the world and its contents are full of the Lord's footprints; and as in all they see God, so in all human works they hope they see good in man.

Once more as to the believer's hope of the Master's Advent. Dr. Arnold wrote: "Modern history appears to be not only *a* step in advance of ancient, but *the last* step; it appears to bear marks of the fulness of time, as if there would be no future history beyond it. For the last 1800 years, the Greek literature has fed human intellects, the Roman has been the source of laws, governments, and social civilisation; and what neither could furnish, the perfection of moral and spiritual truth, has been given by Christianity. The changes which have been wrought have arisen out of the reception of these elements by new races,—races endowed with such force of character, that what was old in itself, when exhibited in them, seemed to become new. But races so gifted are, and have been from the beginning of the world, few in number: the mass of mankind have no such power. They either receive the impression of

foreign elements so completely that their own individual character is absorbed, and they take their whole being from without; or, being incapable of taking higher elements, they dwindle away when brought into the presence of a more powerful life, and become at last extinct altogether. Now, looking anxiously round the world for any new races which may receive the seed (so to speak) of our present history into a kindly yet vigorous soil, and may reproduce it, the same and yet new, for a future period, we know not where such are to be found. Some appear exhausted, others incapable, and yet the surface of the whole globe is known to us. The Romans knew that there was a vast portion of earth which they did not know; how vast it might be was a part of its mysteries. But to us all is explored; imagination can hope for no new Atlantic island, to realise the vision of Plato's Critias; no new continent peopled by youthful races, the destined restorers of our worn-out generations. Everywhere the search has been made, and report has been received; we have the full amount of earth's resources before us, and they seem inadequate to supply life for a third period of human history."

If things around seem to set their confirming seal on the believer's hope that the fulness of time is nearly come, how ought this strengthened hope to work in us? Surely we ought each to rouse up, and seek that others be partakers of it with us; surely it ought to soften judgment's picture of each, and incline us to hope ever for the successful storming of the most redoubted citadel amongst hearts by our Captain; surely we shall be quick to watch for gaps by which it shall be won; most tenderly solicitous lest any false action on our part should hinder the work. Hope is faith's anchor; oh, reader! it is

worth any cost to help a brother; and the work is one needing no fabulous amount of effort, but real, prayerful, patient, constant toil; we must give thought to it; how best this one may be encouraged, yet warned; praised, yet humbled; saddened, yet comforted! Such loving, hoping faith is, indeed, a *rara avis*,—we live so far below our privileged calling, so blind to our solemn trusts.

"Cry, if thou wilt, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts;' but show that thou believest Him to be holy, by being holy thyself. Sing, if thou wilt, 'the Father, of an infinite Majesty;' but show that thou believest His Majesty to be infinite, by obeying His commandments, like the three children, let them cost thee what they may."[1] And vaunt, if thou wilt, of thy love to Him who died for thee, but show that thou believest He died for thee, by dying to self and living to Him.

Love hopeth all things; it tracks, wherever it possibly can, its Maker's workmanship, hopes ever that beneath the surface flows a healthy life-stream, albeit the skin is marred, and works in trust that the image of God shall soon be perfectly, and yet variously, reflected in all its fellows.

Beloved fellow-pilgrim! seek with me to know more of this blessed hope which maketh not ashamed—to attain to this perfect love. But a little while shall the opportunity of wearing the grace of hope be lent us; soon we shall know all. Oh, that, whilst we have time, we may glorify Jesus by experiencing and witnessing it!

[1] Kingsley.

CHAPTER XV.

"And art thou faint with weariness,
With suffering, want, or woe?
Faint through affliction's sharp distress,
Or strugglings with the foe?

Have fiery darts on thee been hurled?
Is all thy cross within?
Or art thou groaning for a world
Of sinners and of sin?

Have clouds concealed thy Saviour's face?
Has darkness wrapt thy path?
Why art thou weeping, child of grace?
Why trembling, child of faith?

Oh, pilgrim! raise thy drooping eye
From off that stormy sea;
Consider Him who came to die,
And bear His cross for thee.

Bitter the wormwood and the gall,
And sharp the spear and crown;
And worse, a million fold, than all—
His Father's righteous frown.

Muse on Him, suffering saint, until
The sight enable thee
To do or suffer all His will,
Whate'er that will may be."

Rev. E. H. Bickersteth.

CHARITY ENDURETH ALL THINGS.

Divine Love, hating Sin, endures the Sinner—Endures Ingratitude —The Mahommedan Inscription—Divine Love sympathises with Sorrow—The Disciple's Cross—The Wife's Struggle—The Poor Man and the Curate—Self-crucifixion—The Burnt-offering —Jesus—Natural Lusts—Cost of Service—Good to be here—Charity identifies itself with Each for whom Christ died—The Sikh Peon—Sarah Martin—The Lady's-maid—The Believer's Mission—Mistakes—Our Brother's Keeper—Scenes in War—The Source of Endurance.

MAN is prone to love only those who love him, or those whom he can admire, but Divine love exemplifies and requires more than this. "God commandeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" "in due time Christ died for the ungodly;" "when we were enemies," the Father yielded the Son of His love for us. Beloved reader! seek now with me such a true view of our lost, filthy state by nature, that we may rightly appreciate the boundless, unfathomable extent of meaning comprised in this description required of man, and exemplified in God—Charity endureth all things.

> "To know thyself, and thy God to know,
> This is true wisdom here below."

Oh, to realise that we are looking on a feature of the Godhead, as we search into what this endurance in love implies! May the Holy Spirit indeed quicken our souls, and give us sight to see Calvary's sacrifice in all its keenness of spiritual anguish and bodily agony! may the stories of Gethsemane and the Cross be a very reality to

us! may our deepest interest be excited and absorbed in them, e'en as if, with the multitude of old, we stood within sight and hearing of the Man of Sorrows!

Love endureth all things. Sorrows, pain, ingratitude, sin, calumny, reproach, criticism, coldness, and suspicion; all these things change it not, when they fall to its own lot; and willingly love helps to bear them when they form the cross of another, making his cares and sorrows its own. What a striking feature is this in the character of God, both as a Sovereign enthroned over all, and as Jesus clothed with mortal flesh! The thing most painful to God is sin,—it is an abomination, a contrariety, to His very nature; and yet because He is love, He stooped to man when he was covered with its leprosy, utterly loathsome, sick and defiled in every member. "When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live." We cannot know how much love stooped, what cost to self-pleasing it paid, when thus the sinless One touched the sinner; but the deeper our views of the intrinsic evil of sin become, through the revelation of the exceeding spotless beauty of God, the better shall we be able to enter into this wondrous chapter of prophecy.

And, veiling Himself in mortality, yet more clearly shines this endurance of love in God manifest in the flesh, who for thirty-three years breathed a tainted atmosphere, and bore unceasing suffering through contact with evil. Oh, how other loves sink to nothing in comparison with His love! "To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," surely this is the worthiest, noblest, happiest study of man! His love endured sin. Oh, to remember this! It cost Him constant

pain, constant effort. Like the sensitive plant, He would naturally shrink from its very neighbourhood; but He endured to show how man may live—to give man, in exchange of fear, hope for eternity.

And, having endured for a time, did not exhaust His love; man's scoffing taunts, and supercilious rejection, did not quench it; God waited of old in endurance, He waited on earth in endurance, and His love endureth still; for all He died, even though many He knew would bitterly blaspheme against Him and His sacrifice. Thus with Mahommedans; a missionary amongst them testifies, "The continual element of controversy in which I am obliged in this Mahommedan city (Lucknow) to live is *killing;* I do not know what other word to use. Often my whole spirit shrinks, and I feel inclined to faint under the burden."[1] The jeer, the mocking smile, with which they listen to the fact of Jesus being the Son of God, the alone Saviour, is such as to terrify the testifying Christian, to whom that Lord is precious. Even on their yataghans, or sabres, are found inscriptions breathing the bitterness of their scoffing hate. What must the Father's love feel when thus His beloved Son is dishonoured? What matchless endurance His, to bear such rejection of His alone offered way of salvation! The following is part of such an inscription on a Damascene weapon, translated—

"In the name of God, the compassionate and the merciful:
There is no other but Him, the living and true God;
He made the heavens and all that therein is.
But who is he that intercedeth?"

So, too, with the heathen; He suffered for them, though

[1] Rev. W. Storrs.

He knew how many would continue to worship idols, giving His glory to the creature; how the daily offering out of their allowance of food would be laid on the idol's shrine, and the bell rung to inform him when his meals were ready. So, too, with all men, for all come under one of the two classes, bitter opponents, rejectors, and scoffers, or idolaters. How sadly true is the complaint urged against us by God, that of His gold and His silver, given of Him, we have made instruments of iniquity; that of His very gifts we have done sacrifice to His enemy, turning them into snares. His sunshine, His food, His raiment, His varied pleasures and beauties in nature, His endowment of powers of mind, of body, of science, of art, how are they received without a thought, without thanks, and devoted to the gratification of self! And yet He lavishes His blessings, yet His love endureth.

Love, too, endureth all things for and with others. It is written, "In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them;" "His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel;" "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye." And Jesus never witnessed affliction without allaying it. Not idly did He gaze at the passing funeral cortége; not lightly did He pass by the sick, the maimed, the blind, in the streets; not indifferently did He hear that the wine was exhausted; not contented with having ministered of the bread of life, did He see the multitude fainting for lack of the bread that perisheth? Every passing event interested His keen sympathies, the story of every man He met enlisted His attention, and His loving spirit groaned for each bleeding, crushed, broken heart; He bore their troubles on His own; and when they might not, in the providence of God, be removed by the touch of His hand,

the word of His mouth, He felt for and loved the sufferer.

And now let us still "consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself," such increase of suffering through sensibility of love, as we turn to mark the reflex grace His shining into, and on to, them requires of believers. Love endureth all things; not through appliance of force, not of unavoidable necessity. An enlightened mind, or will broken by suffering, may exist, without there being love—a will voluntarily subdued to Christ. Love willingly bears the cross, esteems suffering for Christ's sake a blessed calling. Striving ever to follow in His steps, who was ever clear of having given cause for offence, the believer bears with undeserved reproach, ingratitude, suspicion, hatred, calumny; he is not made angry if the world, which killed his Master, turns aside from him; fickleness in friends does not affect his feelings towards them. Be the cross assigned him one openly visible as Christ's, or one only hereafter to be clearly manifested as such, now apparently an ordinary one, such as others than the "little flock" are likewise called to bear, he grasps it tightly, rejoicing, like the disciples of old, to be counted worthy to endure. If his Leader was known as the Man of Sorrows, he expects, wishes for, the same badge to mark him. Jesus was acquainted with grief, had unceasingly to endure; false accusations, unkind receptions of His presence and message, were His constant trials, and through like tribulation must His people earn their reward, and follow Him to glory. Satan, the world, and the flesh, are in league against the Gospel, and Gospel messengers, and it is generally only after many a hard-fought battle that a soul is won to gem the Saviour's crown. Dear reader!

in these days this badge seems too much forgotten; we forget often the character delineated of those who shall enter into glory,—sufferers, fighters, wearied ones, scoffed at, despised ones. That is not the believer's cross which an earthly one might be called on to endure; the cross is, suffering for Christ's sake; that must be either the exciting cause of his trouble, or the power through which he patiently endures it. "The love of Christ constraineth us," must be his motto. In His name, for His sake, he must bear every repulse, and wait untiringly the subjection of the unkind, rebellious spirit.

A poor woman in America had been brought through conviction to conversion of spirit, and was exceedingly anxious to become outwardly a member of Christ's Church; but she was dreadfully afraid of her drunken, godless husband, and thought it would be best to join membership privately. This her minister would not permit, alleging that she was bound to honour her husband, and treat him kindly and openly; she must not be ashamed of Christ, trustless in God, or unwilling to bear hardness, as a good soldier, for His name's sake. Weeping bitterly, she exclaimed, "Then I can never come to the Saviour's table!" The clergyman urged her telling her husband her desire, and promised to come himself and plead for her. The visit, though, received only an icy reception, and the wife was dreadfully threatened.

"And will you yield to his threats," said the minister at a future visit, "and disobey what you yourself say is the command of Christ?"

"I do know it is my duty; I feel it; the Testament makes it plain in Jesus Christ's own words. But we are poor people. I am a poor woman, without friends,

pain, constant effort. Like the sensitive plant, He would naturally shrink from its very neighbourhood; but He endured to show how man may live—to give man, in exchange of fear, hope for eternity.

And, having endured for a time, did not exhaust His love; man's scoffing taunts, and supercilious rejection, did not quench it; God waited of old in endurance, He waited on earth in endurance, and His love endureth still; for all He died, even though many He knew would bitterly blaspheme against Him and His sacrifice. Thus with Mahommedans; a missionary amongst them testifies, "The continual element of controversy in which I am obliged in this Mahommedan city (Lucknow) to live is *killing;* I do not know what other word to use. Often my whole spirit shrinks, and I feel inclined to faint under the burden."[1] The jeer, the mocking smile, with which they listen to the fact of Jesus being the Son of God, the alone Saviour, is such as to terrify the testifying Christian, to whom that Lord is precious. Even on their yataghans, or sabres, are found inscriptions breathing the bitterness of their scoffing hate. What must the Father's love feel when thus His beloved Son is dishonoured? What matchless endurance His, to bear such rejection of His alone offered way of salvation! The following is part of such an inscription on a Damascene weapon, translated—

"In the name of God, the compassionate and the merciful:
There is no other but Him, the living and true God;
He made the heavens and all that therein is.
But who is he that intercedeth?"

So, too, with the heathen; He suffered for them, though

[1] Rev. W. Storrs.

When she awoke in the morning her husband was gone! This alarmed her; his usual time for rising on the Sabbath being late, she feared this change boded evil. Hastily rising, she dressed and went out, with the children, to look for him; but he was nowhere to be found. With a sad heart she busied herself preparing the breakfast; but in about an hour he came in. "Wife," said he, with a careless accent, "I suppose you want to go to church to-day, and it is too far for you to go afoot; you know I am too poor to keep any horse, so I have been down to Mr. B——'s to get a ride for you in his waggon. He says you can ride with him, as well as not, if you want to go; and I will stay at home, and take care of the children." She was so astonished she could hardly believe her ears; she hesitated for a moment, then, as the truth burst upon her, threw her arms around his neck and wept. He wept too, but strove to conceal it; and making some casual remark about breakfast, as if to divert his thoughts, went back to tell Mr. B—— she would go with him.

She went, and partook of the Communion of the Lord's Supper for the first time. On her return, her husband met her pleasantly, and when she frankly said she had even been to the Table, he merely replied, lightly, "Well, what of that?" Never again did he oppose her religion, but always took pains to accommodate her to the utmost of his power. He accompanied her to the baptism of their children, and for a time, at least, was more temperate. Of his wife he always testified, "*She* was a true Christian, and no pretender; and wished all professing as much were as good as she."

Was not this woman's endurance after the same kind as that of Abraham? And though, in both cases, the

will was accepted, and the actual sacrifice not required, still in both the excess of true supreme love Godward is strikingly manifest. That which was dear as their own life they were willing to yield on the altar of their God. The bitterness was all the deeper in the poor wife's case, for her husband, he who was bound as one — flesh of her flesh — to her, was incensed against her, and she had no hope regarding him to cheer her. The cost was great, but He for whom it was borne was worthy it all, and far more than they could give.[1]

There was an old man at Watton whom the curate, Spencer Thornton, had often in vain sought to win for Christ, and to the ordinances of the sanctuary. On his being taken ill and confined to bed, the young minister went to the cottage, and asked to see him. The old man, hearing his voice below, answered, in no very courteous tone, "I don't want *you* here; you may go away!" Next day he went again to the foot of the stairs: "Well, my friend, may I come up to-day?" Again he was thanklessly repulsed: "I don't want *you* here!" For twenty-one successive days did he thus try in vain; on the twenty-second his loving endurance was rewarded, and he was permitted to read and pray beside the aged sufferer. The poor man recovered, and was thenceforth one of the most regular attendants at the house of God, giving evidence of a real saving change of heart.

How contrary was this meek bearing of a poor man's contemptuous treatment to the spirit of pride and quickness to take offence natural to man! Instead of turning away offended, love waited in patience, esteeming the hope of winning the sinner worth delay, effort, and un-

[1] Our Exemplars, Poor and Rich.

kind personal reception. Another point is to be marked in Thornton's enduring love; he did not force himself, as too many rich, even amongst Christians, are apt to do, upon this poor man; but with courtesy as well as zeal served him, waiting his bidding ere he entered his house, esteeming it a sacred bound, into which he had no right, unasked, unwelcomed, to enter.

Again, love endureth all things; it denies itself, at any cost, of anything displeasing to the object of its affections. Hence, as bearing with the sinner cost much endurance of loving patience to Him who was without spot—blameless, so sin will become exceeding hateful to His people; and, seeing that it is naturally akin to them, they will be willing at any price to receive the discipline, and yield the lusts, which shall tend to fit them for their sinless Creator's enjoyment.

Love endureth all things; oh, would, reader, such testimony were true of our love! would that our holiness made the touch of the least kind, the least degree, of sin unbearable! There may be a horror of grosser sins without a spark of holiness in the soul; civilisation, fashion, man's opinion, conscience, make judgment to be passed on some bare-faced, unblushing evils. But love requires more than this; it asks that all that is contrary to the revealed pure will of God be held in abhorrence—be loathed; that the very garment spotted by the flesh be hated; that no sin should be accounted little, excusable, or a boasted infirmity. Thus, He who has commanded, "Do not kill," has also said, "Take no thought for your life;" He who has said, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me," has commanded also, "Judge not;" He who has forbidden selfishness, has required also, "Redeem the time." Being subjects, not only of infir-

mities, but of sins, the putting on this attainment of holiness will demand sometimes the pulling out, as it were, of a right eye, and cutting off a right hand. But for the tried believer's comfort, it is written, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." Sufficient for him to discover that any habit of his life or conversation, or casual indulgence, is contrary to his Lord's pleasure, and he will never rest till the one be uprooted, and the other ceased from altogether—till both become intuitively hated and shunned. Thus he grows to entertain the fear of the Lord; not the natural, slavish dread of an unknown God, but a filial awe, exciting grief for, and shrinking from, *sin*, rather than for and from the *suffering* it entails; as when Joseph urged, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" What a contrast to Jacob's selfish trembling, "My father peradventure will feel me; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing!"

An old writer has said, "When the flail of affliction is upon me, let me not be as the chaff which flies in Thy face, but as the wheat which lies at Thy feet." Let us endure any chastening, any wrenching from favourite friends, places, and employments; let us suffer all gladly, striving so to receive and use each lesson, that the image of God may thereby become more perfected in us. Let the contrary tempers, the ill-breeding, the meant and thoughtless provocations, the wilful interruptions on our sought-retirement, of those around, with every opposition of our will, train us in patient self-sacrifice, and work in us the love of worthy cross-bearers. There is more pleasing of God, more true self-denial, more difficult

effort, in thus gently, humbly enduring ordinary evils, than in any self-sought, self-imposed, inflictions.

Love endureth all things; but though the child of God aims at the goal of His perfection, for years, perhaps all through his earthly course, how sadly different is the cause of the pain which necessitates loving endurance! God hates sin, but in mercy endures the defiled sinner's oft-repeated waywardnesses and transgressions. The believer endures the constant chafing of his will, yielding up of his desires, and sacrifice of self; "the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, contrary the one to the other;" "the law in the members warring against the law" of newly-implanted holiness. Beautifully is this endurance of love in God and His children typified in the burnt-offering of the Jewish dispensation. "It was wholly burnt on the altar. Christ sums up the First Commandment,—'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind:' the type evidently refers to this in speaking so particularly of the parts of the burnt-offering; for 'the head,' 'the fat,' 'the legs,' 'the inwards,' are all distinctly enumerated. 'The head' is the well-known emblem of *the thoughts;* 'the legs,' the emblem of *the walk;* 'the inwards,' the constant and familiar symbol of *the feelings and affections of the heart;* 'the fat,' of *the general health and vigour of the whole.* In Jesus these were all surrendered, and all without spot or blemish."[1]

His will was attuned perfectly to the Father's, in that He was one with Him; yet that will being regulated by its principle, love, though it cost Him no effort

[1] Jukes. The Law of the Offerings.

to be holy, in that His nature was essentially pure, He subjected Himself to infirmities and wants, the sacrifice of which cost Him as much as they can cost His followers; home, friends, sympathy, food, raiment, sleep, all these He required, yet to the unneeded indulgence of any of them He never yielded. As God, He could not bear the touch of anything unsanctified; as man, He kept the body in perfect obedience to the law of the Spirit.

We, receiving only the Spirit through grace and by measure, are naturally wholly unattuned to this law of holiness; easily, unthinkingly, we not only touch sin in others, but live in it ourselves; the lusts of the flesh enthral us, desire blinds us, and the endurance required in us by heavenly love is the continual struggle against self, the attainment of a tender conscience, a holy shrinking from what would otherwise be delighted in.

Beloved fellow-pilgrim! let us seek a deeper insight into this solemn, all-important, all-blessed truth. Let us cease not to consider Jesus, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God. Had not His been a whole burnt-offering, it could not have availed for man's salvation; but He surrendered Himself unreservedly. "Had there been but one thought in the mind of Jesus which was not perfectly given to God,—had there been but one affection in the heart of Jesus which was not yielded to His Father's will,—had there been one step in the walk of Jesus which was not taken for God, but for His own pleasure, then He could not have been accepted. Everything He did or said was for God. From first to last self had no place; His Father's work, His Father's will, were everything. Yet He was perfect man, and as such had a human will, as we have. In one point only did it differ from ours; His will was

always subject to His Father. As a man, His thoughts were human thoughts; His affections human affections. But how much of these did He reserve for self, for His own ease, or credit, or pleasure? What one act recorded of Him was for His own advancement? What one word which was not in entire devotedness to His Father? With all His heart He lived for God, for 'the inwards' were all consumed; with all His soul, and with all His strength, for 'the fat and head' were offered. His offering was not the surrender of one part, while He kept what He most valued for Himself. It was not the surrender of what cost nothing, or what cost but little, or what was comparatively worthless. He gave Himself in all His perfectness, and satisfied the heart of God."[1]

Such is the offering He requires of us,—the love which endureth all things; which keeps back no part of the price; which yields what most it prizes; which deems His service the happiest employ conceivable; which resigns all desire; and truly feels, as well as professes, it to be, "however keen the smart,"

> "Sweet to lie passive in His hands,
> And know no will but His."

But, oh! *do* we thus ever offer ourselves to Him a whole burnt-offering—a living sacrifice? Love is a sacred thing, that ought not to be burnt to idols; yet do we not naturally offer affections, talents, time, our all, on self, or some earthly idol?

Are not even professed Christians prone to give the rein to their lusts, and, instead of seeking ever to be guided by the answer to the prayer, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" to be satisfied with looking after

[1] Jukes.

their earthly interests, and unquestioningly gratifying their desires, excusing apparent inconsistencies? Jesus, though man, was pure from sin; temptations from without, through spiritual and human agency, continually assailed Him, but His very nature shrank from them. Alas! not so with us; conceived in sin, rebellious from the womb, treachery and filthiness within, and attacks from without. Oh! do not let us pass this point over hastily; much hangs on it; for, reader, though salvation is a free gift, and we can do nothing towards it, yet if we would enter life we must keep the commandments; and, oh, how fearful, blindly now to yield to any passion, and discover, too late, that it had shut us out of that land into which nothing impure can enter! "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after." Not only shall those sins esteemed of man accursed be causes of hindrance, now, to high attainment in the Christian life, and to knowledge of God, and, if indulged in to the end, hereafter to entrance into the undefiled inheritance, but the mote, the so-called little sins, weaknesses, shall, if not overcome, in like manner be our ruin. If the drunkard, through disobedience, cannot inherit the kingdom, and men are quick to acknowledge such sin disgusting, such punishment just, how shall it be with the fritterer of talents—the waster of precious lent time? Is it not true, that "the total loss of time in pure contented idleness, needless sleep, and painful listlessness, is to be condemned, without mercy, as the most unqualified guilt?"[1] And yet, how many look on it as a lawful indulgence? Alas! the world's judgment too much warps the understanding and

[1] John Foster.

convictions of those whose code for guidance is unearthly, and beyond a sinner's appreciation. Flesh and blood shrink from entertaining a belief which shall cause them to pass through a refining fire. Believers find that the service of God requires a love which "is not altogether a delirium, though it has many points in common therewith; it is a discerning of the infinite in the finite—of the idea made real."[1] It gives a joy, a friendship, comparable to nought known to the worlding's experience; yet it requires a self-sacrifice, an immensity of cost, which ensures a sincerity in its devotees. Excitement may nerve to much suffering, glory may strengthen the fainting warrior, fame may spur on the young beginner, but deep, true love only can enable the believer to keep close to Jesus, to follow in His track, to drink of His cup, to be baptized with His baptism, to continue faithful amidst evil report and good report, in the calm monotony of daily life, the unseen inward struggle, the unsounded victory, the thoughtless false step, the unimpassioned call for self-denial.

Dear reader! if love endureth all things, and our hearts, as they must do, condemn us in having fallen far short in such attainment, let us turn not away, disheartened, disgusted, hardened. "It is good for us to be here;" painfully different as is this valley of humiliation from Tabor's glorious height; no cross, no crown; through Jordan was Canaan entered; the valley lies at the foot of the hill; "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him;" through endurance, love passes to joy exceeding, unchanging, unending.

[1] Carlyle.

If love endureth here according to the will of God, it shall find soon that its heaviest burden, its keenest anguish, here, is light and but for a moment, compared to the exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Oh, do let us more wholly yield ourselves an offering unto Him whose love we can never repay; and rest not till in every point we perfectly reflect His image, till in all things we naturally have one will with His, and but one want—His glory!

And now let us consider, further, how love endureth all things, in bearing the griefs of others. Intuitively the sufferings of the few become our own; and heavenly love requires the universality of the same lively sympathy. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ;" "we ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves;" "the members should have the same care one for another." And here, as we have seen, how brightly the Master leads the way! Oh! that we may seek and obtain much grace to follow in His steps; with effort, with cost, if needful, with pain, trying to relieve, to lighten, to gladden, other pilgrims' paths, both by action and prayer.

A beautiful instance of this enduring love for Christ's sake was given by a Sikh soldier in the Indian mutiny of 1857. Mr. Edwards, the magistrate and collector of the Budaon district of Rohilcund, having, immediately on hearing of the Meerut massacres, sent away his wife and child to the hills for safety, was left, the only European officer, with a population of nearly 1,100,000 souls. Signs of rebellion became apparent from the 25th of May, and, after having for a time vainly endeavoured to restore order and confidence, he was obliged to escape for his life, and, in disguise as a native, to wander about

the country till the middle of September. His fearful danger, alarms, and privations, during all that time, can scarcely be realised by those who have not passed through like scenes of hair-breadth escapes for life. Of all his servants, and the people round, one only boldly befriended the lonely, oppressed Englishman. Wuzeer Singh, a native of the Punjab, and originally a sepoy in the 29th Regiment N.I., had, a few years before, whilst on detachment duty at Seharunpoor, been converted to Christianity, through the instrumentality of the missionaries there. In December 1856, he came, with the rest of his company, to form the guard over the Budaon treasury, and, along with the few native Christians of that place, attended service every Sabbath at the magistrate's house. When the detachment returned to head-quarters, Wuzeer Singh, wishing to join himself to this company of Christians, retired from the regiment. Mr. Edwards then gave him service as an orderly on his personal guard, and he had been in this situation but a few days when the mutiny broke out at Budaon. From that time he stood as a devoted servant beside the ex-magistrate, accompanying him in all his wanderings, scenting out danger for him, and revealing it, and seeking, as far as he could, to supply his necessities. His devotion was the more remarkable, as it did not spring from feelings of attachment to a master, after a service of years; evidently, it was a sense of duty drawn from Scripture; a heaven-inspired love, not thinking of self, not saving of self, but enduring all things, identifying itself with the needy.[1]

Such was the principle also that influenced Sarah Martin, the poor dressmaker. She abstracted one day in

[1] Personal Adventures during the Indian Mutiny.

the week from her employment, thereby reducing her small earnings by one-sixth, that she might devote it to visiting the prisoners in the gaol. Some years afterwards, a lady induced her, but with great difficulty, to accept a seamstress's remuneration for a second day, which she was to spend in the rest her health seemed to require. To rest, however, while her fellow-creatures could be benefited by her exertions, she could not; and, though refraining from her visits to the prison, she gave religious instruction to a class of children, until it was otherwise provided by the establishment of Sunday-schools in her parish. She then obtained permission to teach the workhouse children. In 1838, having inherited a property worth 12*l.* a-year, she gave up dressmaking, and began to teach at the gaol every day. Upon the outsides of paper and pasteboard, bought with her own money, she wrote copies and texts, for the use of her workhouse and prison pupils; often remaining up, after her day's toil, until past midnight, to prepare them. From reading the Scriptures to individual prisoners, she went on to organise regular Sabbath services, the duties of both reader and preacher devolving upon herself. By her efforts to provide them with work when they left gaol, her regularity in visiting them from time to time, at their homes or in service, her unfailing sympathy, she was the means, through grace, not only of winning many to holiness, but also of preventing their after-relapse into crime.

It was but a few months past that the writer received, from an elderly nurse, the following touching facts:—

"The first thing that ever touched my heart, and brought me a penitent to the cross of Christ, was the copying of this text ('God is love'), by a fellow-servant years ago. I was but a young girl then, and Helen wasn't much

older. She was lady's-maid in Mr. ——'s family. They were very rich, and had a good many servants, men and women. I was under-nurse. We all got good wages, and were very comfortable, as far as worldly things went; but of course Helen, being with the ladies, was made most of, and treated confidential-like. She had a good time of it, too, with their old dresses, which were given her before they were very shabby neither.

"She was a holy young woman, if ever there was one, and I think her gentle, earnest way made even our young ladies like *her* speaking to them about their souls. She had a word with all of us when she could, and we saw she lived out what she said, which is the great thing. And yet she was so merry — the life of us all down-stairs, and that's saying a good deal, for we weren't dull neither.

"Well, one evening, at supper, cook's brother came in. Missus usen't to mind our having a friend to see us now and then. He often came, this young Mr. ——; he was a clerk in some office, and got a nice bit of money for his writing, I guess; for he dressed very gentleman-like. He was quite taken with Helen, who would never, though, sit near him, and wouldn't let him be as free with her as he was even with all of us, whom he didn't care for. Not but that she liked him—leastways I fancies she did; but she was shy, and very pretty. We used to have serious conversations over meals often down in that kitchen; I remember some well. But Helen got bantered; for not one thought as strict as she did, though we none of us could help but feeling, we'd like to be as she. She was always so gentle and kind — always had time to do anything we asked of her, and she'd a big heart for all our stories. She never seemed tired listening so long as any one wanted to speak.

"Well, as I was saying, this evening cook's brother came in to supper, and told us of a young woman who had just gone off to Australia, having married, leaving her old, nearly blind, widowed mother destitute. I can't remember all the particulars, but I know he said she'd have to go into the workhouse.

"We all abused the girl right and left, and talked over the business till bed-time. Helen, who had been sitting silent and thoughtful, gently said, '*We* are sinning if we judge harshly and think evil of an absent one, who can't defend herself. Would it not be better to try to make things better, as they can't be undone? Perhaps some will add to this for the poor old widow,'—putting half-a-crown into Mr. ——'s hand, and leaving the room.

"Two or three days after that, we were all startled to hear that Helen had given notice, and, to the sorrow of all up-stairs and down-stairs, was to leave in a month. Her fixed resolve was to take a room for herself and the widow, and maintain her by her own needle-work. We all tried in vain to shake her purpose, and laugh her out of such unheard-of self-denial—for a complete stranger, too!

"Her hardest struggle was in refusing Mr. ——'s offer of marriage, on learning that he would have nothing to do with the 'blind beggar.' He was furious with himself for having brought the case to her hearing, denounced her as cruel and unnatural, in thinking more of the stranger than of him who loved her. But, I think, if he did really love her, he'd have kept to her through all, and helped her out of his earnings. It seemed to me he loved his pride better than he did her.

"I shall never forget the last time they met. She looked suffering, and yet smiled when she took his hand,

and looked full into his eyes (I wonder he wasn't touched), and said, 'God is love, James. Jesus has saved my soul, by dying for me. I am pledged to live for Him—only to be His messenger on earth, not a pleasure-seeker. I am to be like Him, so *I must be love!*'

"That word, and seeing the big tears roll down her cheeks, as she ran up-stairs, brought me to Jesus; 'for,' I thought, 'He must be a good Master, and a good Friend, too,—one worth the having,—who, though unseen, made His real people love Him better than themselves.'"

Thus love endureth all things; welling up from the heart of Jesus, it flows into His people, and those to whom He is dearest will be most unbound from their own cares and interests, most free to live for, and think of, others. The deeper a soul drinks into the spirit of its Lord, the more will it overflow of the same, not emptying itself, yet refreshing and feeding all around. And, beloved reader! this is the believer's mission—*an individual mission of love.* No matter where God's providence places, in the home circle, or amongst strangers, amongst many or few, to look on all and each, as on those whom the Master identifies with Himself: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me." And, surely, with the Lord Himself for our portion here, and heaven for our eternal home, we ought to be free of self, seeking to spend and be spent for Him, "who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." Each believer should be a personification of love, living in Him who is love, and Christ living in Him. Ever should we exercise our souls "in a loving sympathy with sorrow in every form. Soothe it, minister to it, succour it, revere it. It is the relic of Christ in the world, an image of

the great Sufferer, a shadow of the cross. It is a holy and venerable thing."[1]

Jesus must always have been enduring; yet at the marriage-feast He was likely numbered amongst the happy of the earth,—they who knew not that He bore through life man's sins, who knew not that He had left a throne, probably deemed His lot no sadder, His cross no weightier, than that of other men. Learn we hence how little, how very little, we can know another's heart and feelings; how feebly, at best, we can meet His need by sympathy; how often we miss the mark, and fail to relieve at all; perhaps by rough (unmeant as such) touches wound him who is already faint and sinking. Oh, let us be more careful in our studies of man, that we congratulate not him that walks in darkness, nor add to the full cup the drop that would make it overflow! As we travel onward, let us stoop right and left, seeking to understand each brother's difficulties, infirmities, joys, and sorrows, and bear them on our hearts, and their peculiarities in our minds, even as it is written of our High-Priest: "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands;" "I know their sorrows;" "Israel is not hid from me." As the high-priest of old had always to wear the breastplate containing the names of the twelve tribes, so our Christ has gone into heaven, not only as our forerunner and representative, but still, as when on earth, as man's Elder Brother, man's sympathising Friend. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord" carries, and tends, and

[1] Butler.

strengthens His people. How precious His assurance, "Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you."

Love endureth all things; fain would I inscribe this motto indelibly on your heart and my own, reader. How it enhances the solemnity of life! How it layeth on us innumerable responsibilities for which we must answer! We are our brother's keeper, and to us God looks for the earnest efforts, the tender language, the speaking looks, the gentle touches, which shall cheer many a saddened heart, lighten many a heavy load, support many a weary or sick brother, win many a wandering member of the vast human family, and give a bright spot for his memory to recall with gladness.

Such enduring love has been ofttimes evidenced, even midst the fearful carnage-scenes of war. Here, the cup of water brought to the dying officer, and transferred by him to the suffering private; there, amidst shot and shell, another officer, lifting in front of him, on his saddle, a wounded private, supporting another with his left hand, and allowing a third to cling to his stirrup; here, a private giving his life for his officer; there, another lingering under fire for the Bible and lock of hair, which he knows will be so dearly cherished by the far-off widow! All these are either traits kindled by the love of Jesus, or remnants of Eden's beauty, on which we gaze with admiring love. Let us go and do likewise. It matters little whether our labours be known of many or few, whether they be such as win glory, or the hidden, more common, ones of ordinary life; we work not for man's applause, seeing that he must give account like us;

but it does matter that the spirit of love be found in us, and be so evidenced in our life-walk that others shall feel its genial warmth and healing balm, and love to pour their sorrows into our ear. Are we now thus walking? thus carrying on our hearts the names and circumstances of our brethren? Are we daily striving to throw some rays of pure joy into the world? Are we enduring a cross for Christ and for man?

God grant us a clear revelation of this love in all its points, enabling us to see Him brightly, by faith, as its perfect fulfilment! May He give unto us keen sensitive antipathy to sin, grateful submission to His discipline for attaining it, patience under trials through man, fervent striving against the flesh, and large-heartedness to bear the griefs and joys of others! Nature here must fall far short of the beauties of grace, for love, to be perfect, even towards man, must be holy, must be fed from a superhuman Source, must be kept burning ever through the sacred fire of the Spirit. There is blessed comfort in this fact; for God knoweth our weakness, and is willing, waiting, to supply our need. To Him we have to look for copy, and power to imitate the copy. His own goodness endureth continually, and He "is able to make all grace abound toward us; that we, always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

Thou, Lord, who hast testified to us Thine acceptation of the sacrifice of Thy dear Son for us sinners; grant unto us, we beseech Thee, the sprinkling of His precious blood, and living faith in the same; that so we may not only be forgiven through Him, but taught and strengthened by the Spirit to walk, even as He walked,

rooted and built up in Him, unto the measure of the stature of His own fulness. May His love not only be grafted in our hearts, but watered and tended of Thee! may it grow as into a beauteous palm, affording shade and gladness of heart to each passer-by! Thus may Thy name be glorified in us, and Thy will done on earth as it is in heaven!

CHAPTER XVI.

" They sin, who tell us love can die;
With life all other passions fly—.
All others are but vanity.
But love is indestructible;
Its holy flame for ever burneth,
From heaven it came, to heaven returneth.
Too oft on earth a troubled guest,
At times deceived, at times distrest,
It here is tried and purified,
It hath in heaven its perfect rest;
It soweth here in toil and care,
But the harvest-time of love is there."

SOUTHEY.

" 'Tis o'er; but never from my heart
Shall time thine image blot;
The dreams of other days depart—
Thou shalt not be forgot.
And never, in the suppliant sigh
Poured forth to Him who rules the sky,
Shall mine own name be breathed on high,
And thine remembered not."

DALE.

CHARITY NEVER FAILETH.

Evidence of God's Unchangeableness — The Believer's Comfort — Love's Requirements in Man — The Apprentice — Spencer Thornton — Light in Darkness — Light within Light — Madame de Swetchine — Captain Maconochie — Unqualified Surrender — Little Attentions — Live Slowly — Sequences — Love the Little Ones — The Aged — Parents — Give of Substance — The Burden-bearer and the Presence-chamber — Two Secrets — Creature Absorption into Christ — The Recipient Givers.

"I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye are not consumed;" "with the Father of lights is no variableness, neither shadow of turning;" "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Such is the unchanging character of His love "that sticketh closer than a brother," "the Friend that loveth at all times, the Brother born for adversity." "God is love," and this attribute is the moving principle of His words and actions, *upon* which the same love evidently shines. The same hand which creates, preserves; the same which holds out the reward, strengthens on the race-course; the same heart endures the pain of chastening men, if need be, and delights in shedding gladness on their path.

Wondrously has this love been ever manifested towards our world; in the earliest days of the creation, His "delights were with the sons of men." With some He walked and talked face to face, as a man speaketh to his fellow; over all He watched, providing for their necessities, adding to the same over and above of His exceeding fulness; bearing many rebellious ones "on eagles' wings;" He gave His own Son an offering, that sinners might

escape death, be blessed, be turned from their iniquities; He bore with personal rejections, slights, fickleness, the taint of sinners' company, cruelty, death; He bears still with transgression, unbelief, treason, and ingratitude; never has He left man alone, but by pleasures and pains, by encouragements and chastenings, by hopes and fears, by lessons and recreations, has sought to manifest His love, and do man good. And, beyond time, His love abideth still, His gathered ones sleep in Him, and soon He will come and take all dominion to Himself, and give to His blood-bought ones a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters, in His everlasting mansions, whence they shall go no more out, but, redeemed from sin, and clothed in spotless purity, they shall for ever partake in His presence of joys exceeding, unutterable; rivers of delight, springing from His own inexhaustible fulness of perfection. And if our hearts ever stumble over the doom of the lost, love is there, though finite minds may not be able to trace it through the glass. It must, of necessity, be that in the Infinite One, and His doings, there be much that cannot be unravelled of the finite; yet the day shall declare it. Enough to trust Him who, as Love, cannot deny, cannot betray Himself; "As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law." And here, perhaps, I may venture a suggestion, which has been a help to my own mind. We find in the parable of the sheep and the goats, that the righteous were accepted for the good they had done to Jesus, though they were unconscious of His presence in His members; whilst those on the left hand were cast out because, in rejecting the needy, they had (unconsciously) neglected Christ. The two preceding parables are addressed evidently to those who know the Gospel,

but it would have been false humility for believers to pretend they were ignorant of having served Christ. May it not be truly inferential, that where conscience is the only light revealed, the honest struggle to act in accordance with its requirements may be accepted through Christ, though the sinner is unconscious of the saving medium?[1] Yet it is best to leave all anxious questionings veiled in Bible mystery, and simply rest on the sure Rock. He is faithful that promises; His truth cannot fail, and therefore His love abideth ever, through and in all things.

And, oh! what a glorious resting spot is this to the traveller, amidst life's changing skies and troubled seas! "He is the Rock, His work is perfect;" unchangeably the same, what He has been He is, and ever shall be. "Thou art the same:" yes, now, as ever, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." "Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called." "With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Charity never faileth. It is a truth bound to our hearts, dear as life—is it not, reader? To know that God, even our own God, loves us; that nothing can part us from Him and His love; that our union with Him is indissoluble; that His glory is bound up in our welfare; that His interests and our own are identical; that His ear is ever open to us, His hand ever on us; that sorrow and joy are but

[1] Rev. James McConechy.

varied phases of His affection,—oh! what joy can be at all comparable to this? what more do we need? "The Lord's portion is His people," and He is "the strength of their heart, and their portion for ever." "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." Blessed, blessed truth! His love never changeth; man may forget, may wander, may lose hold in the throng; but God holds His own, and will never leave nor forsake them—never tire through their ingratitude. Cling to Him, loved pilgrim! His love alone is saving, unchangeable, joy-giving, unalloyed with pain; no reed is it, on which, if a man lean, it will pierce his hand, but faithful as its Source is faithful. They who are beloved of Him lack nothing; He rejoices over them with joy; He rests in His love, He joys over them with singing; As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so He rejoices over them; "His whole heart, and His whole soul," are in His chosen.

If such is the character of Divine love, of like kind must His people reciprocate. Returning love must breathe in every throbbing pulse, every thought, every action. *For* Him we must live; *in* Him must be our life; concentrated on Him must be every desire; His will must be our guiding law; at all times, and in all places, spontaneous affection must be the new life welling up from the depths of our being unto Him who has first loved us. And since we see Him in man, therefore towards man will our love extend likewise, not constrainedly, not to a few, not uncertainly, but with ever-fresh, ever-full gushings of Heaven-inspired faithfulness and unchangeableness. Thus our love to God will be manifested, alike in solitude or company, in direct spiritual worship, or in the midst of, and by aid of, life's duties.

" One sight of Jesus, as He is,
Will strike all sin for ever dead."

Coute qui coute, love will resolutely abstain from everything contrary to the Lord's will, and struggle to do such things as are according to the same; for sin consists equally in commission and omission. Every idol will be thrown down, every impurity cast out, every command paid heed to, and God alone exalted. Some part of love's service can be performed only within, in the privacy of the heart's temple; even as the sealing of the compact between the Advocate and sinner is a hidden, personal work, so much of sanctification, much of love's communion, can alone be carried on between God and the individual soul. Such hidden, personal correspondence will *be* even when the body is not alone; and that is the soul's highest stay and dearest privilege. Some bodily loneliness may at times be likewise granted, but such wilderness-solitude is with most men short; as with Emanuel, so with His followers, social ties demand their presence and attendance, and, save when a special call is given, "Come ye into a desert place, and rest awhile" (and then love finds room for intercession for needy man), love is proved best by just doing that duty which is nearest. It is more proof of love, more to the glory of God, "more to the honour of the Christian soldier, by faith to overcome the world, than by a monastical vow to retreat from it; and more for the honour of Christ to serve Him in a city than in a cell."[1] Therefore it is written, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called."

Dr. Spencer relates that there was an apprentice in

[1] Matthew Henry.

his congregation who became convicted of sin, but could find no peace in believing. One day he told Dr. Spencer that he believed he never should be saved if he continued to work, and did not devote his whole time and thought to the subject of his salvation. The minister strenuously argued the point with him, on the ground of the Scriptures, "Six days shalt thou labour;" that if he would not work, neither should he eat; that neglecting an earthly duty would not lead him to the discharge of a spiritual one; that his want of time was only the excuse of a deceitful heart to keep him from an instant duty, namely, fleeing to Christ by faith. But the apprentice was unconvinced, declared that his daily employment drew off his thoughts from religion; and, in his opinion, if he had nothing to do but to seek God, to read, and pray, he should soon find salvation.

Accordingly he quitted work, and went away over the river, beyond the reach of his companions, got a room alone in an obscure house, and shut himself up with his Bible. At the end of a week he called himself to account, examining his heart whether he had made any progress. He could detect none. For three weeks more he determined to devote himself yet more exclusively to the study of his Bible, to prayer, to compelling his obstinate heart to yield. But in vain; to his utter astonishment, he found his convictions subsiding, his fears almost gone, his religious interests vanishing altogether. "I have found," he said, "my own heart the worst companion I could have. If I cannot come to repentance in the workshop, I am sure I never can alone."

He went back to work, still continuing there, amidst his many avocations, to seek; and in a few weeks he was led to see the fulness of Christ's atonement. Jesus

did not pray for His people to be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from its evil. Rather does His love require of our love that, as sheep amongst wolves, as the lily amongst thorns, as light in darkness, as purity amidst defilement, we should be to the praise of His glory. Ever should the spirit of His indwelling love be manifested in our ordinary walk and conversation.

"Thus," is it testified of Spencer Thornton, "was it always with him, 'instant in season, and out of season.' . . . It seemed that he could have to do with many secular things, without being secularized by them. . . . I have known boys check themselves when about to use bad words if he was near; and we used to remark that, when he played at football or cricket, there was a great absence of swearing. . . . After the funeral of a neighbouring clergyman, whom he much loved and esteemed, when the numerous clergy, and others who were present, were dispersing from about the grave, I missed Mr. Thornton. Walking round the church, on the side furthest from the grave, and screened from view, before I could see him, I heard his voice, endeavouring to improve the solemn event, to the good of a poor woman. At the inn, going into the stable, where the horse was being harnessed, I again found him similarly engaged with the ostler. . . . Well do I remember his coming to my lodgings, on the day I was to be ordained, and commending me in prayer to God, and giving me advice and counsel, as we walked up and down before the railway station, waiting for the train. He was not afraid to point out one's faults. Do not you remember his active step, how he would come and put us to flight, as we sat together after dinner? No sooner did he appear than we caught a little of his

activity, and were off to our work. I never saw one who did so much work in a little time; method was combined with activity. Another thing that was most apparent in him was, that he had ever his Master's cause at heart. Wherever he was, whether amongst rich or poor, this was his great object."

The sudden death, the almost translation of this devoted Christian, at an early age, was an unexpected and grievous blow to his mourning friends; yet love to him, and to the Saviour who called him, enabled them, as it has other believing mourners, to rejoice in their bereavement.

"He is not lost—the child of our affections—
But gone unto that school where he no more doth need our kind attentions."

"It is a mysterious appointment. It was so happy a domestic circle, and God was so glorified in it, and man so blessed by it. And it is gone! What can we say? Really nothing, but that God has done it, and God is love. He whose hands were pierced, He has Himself, with those pierced hands, laid upon us this burden. Long ago, He in love infinite *so* ordered it. He brightened those past years that it might end thus, and in *this;* and He is Love, and Power, and Wisdom Infinite. It could not have been ordered otherwise, without crossing some purpose of love and faithfulness. For our dear brother, indeed, it is all manifestly blessed. He has been taken full-handed, doing his Lord's work, and blessed be that servant!"

Yes, love faileth never! "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," is our glad rest in Him, who has led us all our life long, and never failed in keeping His promises. Strong in this confidence, "we can be like a

a bird that sits singing on his twig, and lets God think for him."[1] "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me;" "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; the Lord is the strength of my life." Light lines the darkest cloud, and love gives and accepts with mutual trust.

And when sunshine rests on the believer, and God anoints his head with oil, and makes his cup to run over, then, in grateful adoration, his heart swells with the loving desire of ministering of the gifts to the Giver, and tendering to Him the first-fruits of His ingatherings. Far otherwise is nature's habit—to lose itself amidst adulation, success, wealth, conscious and acknowledged superiority.

Madame de Swetchine was endowed with a most remarkable gift of speech; the proportion of her thoughts, and freedom of her judgment, were striking. She looked on everything in the light of eternity; and this, added to her singular power of discovering, and adapting herself to the needs of others, made her an untold blessing to many souls. Conscious of the value of the talent lent her, she desired not only to feel, but to prove, her gratitude for the same. Her gift being power in speech, she adopted a dumb girl, and lavished on her a mother's love and care. It was her wont, too, to commemorate each chief gladness of her life, by taking a poor person under her charge; these she used to visit regularly, bringing herself to them the relief of which they stood in need.

In 1840, fourteen hundred men, the very refuse of

[1] Martin Luther.

New Holland and Van Diemen's Land, were settled at Norfolk Island. These convicts were huddled together at night in barracks, where the arrangements were such as to violate all sense of decency; whilst by day they were rigorously coerced, their better feelings outraged, and their self-respect destroyed; they were required to salute every private soldier, and even empty sentry-boxes. For the most trifling faults they were heavily ironed and flogged, and then consigned to stone cells. They were generally regarded as objects of curiosity by the officers. Though they worked in irons, it was considered dangerous for even armed officers to approach them; and when a governor spoke to them, they were required to throw aside their tools, while he was additionally protected by a guard of armed orderlies. The men were not even trusted with knives for their food, which they had to tear with their hands and feet. Captain Maconochie was at that time appointed governor; on his arrival, he addressed the assembled convicts, in words full of loving-kindness, recognising them, the outcasts of the outcast, as of the same brotherhood as himself. The men had gathered in hardened indifference, but, as he spoke, their attention was arrested, their features began to work, they struggled hard, but nature prevailed. The flood-gates were opened by the first touch of human sympathy, and tears streamed down faces whose eyes had not been moistened for years. From this moment a blessed change was discernible.

The captain had the cannon guarding the Government House removed, in token of trust; he allotted the men gardens, with pigs and poultry; improved their dwellings; furnished them with knives and forks; and encouraged schools, on the suggestion of the convicts

themselves. He built two churches, distributed books, and instituted prizes; by his constant presence and counsel directing their thoughts to noble aims. Impressed with the purifying effect of music, he procured instruments, and formed a band; holidays and amusements were allowed occasionally, and he caused the funerals to be conducted with respect. The consequence was that the personal attachment to him became excessive; the amount of crime perpetrated very little; the sense of honour and good-will amongst themselves great. All these things Captain Maconochie commenced and carried out at his own suggestion and expense, until he was recalled by a government utterly opposed to the rule of love.[1]

Such all-pervading, all-influencing, all-effective love, is that demanded of man, returning as far as possible to God of like kind and amount as His own. It is not as a book to be closed, as a dress to be taken off, at times; but, once put on, when accepting salvation through Christ, it is never again to be parted from; to love once must be to love for ever; for through time and eternity charity never faileth. If the horn has been raised for us, if Shiloh has come, that we should be saved from our enemies, it has been so ordered also, that henceforth "we might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life." Now, sin must no more find a resting-place in our tabernacle, but each bitter root must be sought for and rooted out in the strength and name of our Leader; manfully must we evermore fight under His banner, until, truly crucified with Christ, we rise with Him to the life immortal. Since His love fills the soul, the believer will think not

[1] Our Exemplars, Rich and Poor.

of only partially following Him, of at times pleasing himself. The cost must be counted, and the unreserved surrender of self made, ere he is safe in the narrow path that leads unto life. His Master's eye is never off him, and therefore man's applause is worth little to him, if his own conscience condemns, alleging lukewarm or only occasional fits of service. True love is always the same, faithful unto the death; counting itself always under obligation, unceasingly in requisition, be its position and duties or leisure what they may. All that it does it brings into the Master's immediate presence, and works in sight of His loved eye; thus near always to Him, discouragements do not hinder, temptations do not allure; love's links permeate his whole life and walk; his motive being pure, his heart right with God, out of the abundance of his love his mouth will speak, and his works testify; not only will he act on the Scriptures, to visit the fatherless and widows, to have pity on the poor, to help the distressed, but, in little things, in the ordinary transactions of social life, he will *live* the Gospel, exercising the same spirit, ever pitiful, ever courteous; always avoiding a rough word or selfish action, and striving to keep clear ever of anything that may be construed by others as breathing an evil intention. Real politeness is, perhaps, most needed where it is deemed superfluous; and hence, possibly, the too common little fracas, and jealousies, and ill-wills, in families. It is said, "Familiarity breeds contempt;" and it is certainly true that a forced intrusion, a freedom unwelcomed by the other party, is no token of love. Love is itself a sensitive flower, and, judging others by itself, will seek not so much violently to demonstrate its own feelings, as to meet the known preferences of its beloved, bearing

with their infirmities, hiding from others, if possible from itself, when the indulgence of such is un-Christ-like, and betokens a yet insubjection of the flesh.

Dear reader! may I specially press this last point with thee? for it is fearfully common to see a slighting, a hasty word, a slander "behind backs," a meant keen dart, offend in Christian families, each of whose members is yet visibly engaged in working in the Lord's vineyard. Oh, brother! is it seemly that, after a day amongst thy poor charge, thou shouldest be unwilling to gratify the request of a child? that, after reading in a cottage, thou shouldest wound intentionally a sister's heart? It is no palliating excuse in thy Maker's judgment, that thy offence was trifling; thine arrow only such as betrayed a weak, a sinning, point in thy victim; for her sensitiveness, her irritation, she will have to give account; but say, how wilt thou answer for thyself? Thy duty is clear, thy path unmistakeably defined. I would say no more, only pass not by the warning angrily; if the cap fits thee, pause, pray, resolve not to offend again; for, oh, beloved! life is short, and full of bitterness; add not thereto for thyself and others; grieve not thy Saviour, but agonise, in His strength, *never* to fail in love! "Think of living! Thy life, wert thou the pitifullest of all the sons of earth, is no idle dream, but a solemn reality. It is thy own; *it is all thou hast to front eternity with!* Work, then, 'like a star, unhasting, yet unresting.'"[1] And in these busy days, when the call is so loudly given, so generally obeyed—

> "Rouse to some work of high and lowly love,
> And thou an angel's happiness shalt know—

[1] Carlyle.

Shalt bless the earth; while, in the world above,
The good begun by thee shall onward flow
In many a branching stream, and wider grow;
The seed that, in these few and fleeting hours,
Thy hands unsparing and unwearied sow,
Shall deck thy grave with amaranthine flowers,
And yield thee fruit Divine in heaven's immortal bowers—"[1]

remember this word, "unhasting;" live *slowly*, thoughtfully, reckoning as thou goest, weighing each action, each word, considering their effects, not selfishly only, but in their bearing on thy fellows. Each hour comes to thee fraught with responsibilities; work on, but wait on likewise.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Life's evening will take its colouring from the day which has preceded it. How will the presence of Jesus be borne, unveiled, save by spirits attuned to His holiness? How will the gathering together be appreciated, save by those who have learnt to love each other below? How shall we rest without a rest above, unless we work slowly, yet unfailingly, below? Unworthy the name of love, that spurious thing which bears not the light of day—which, chameleon-like, changes, according to times, society, and circumstances.

"Walk in love, *as* Christ also hath loved us." Such is the measure set before us; a counting not our life dear unto us, so that we may faithfully minister to God and men; a serving God heartily in all things, and through all persons; a using of the ordinary life for the higher

[1] Willcox.

life; a tenderly caring for every human being into whom has been breathed an unending existence.

Divine love went out to the little ones in the ever-memorable words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;" and He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them. Ah! and we must be tender with the young, for they are an inestimable loan, wells of undefined thought, fountains of pure love and joy. We owe them much, for what would this world be without their ringing laugh, and innocent prattle, and keen sympathies, wiling away melancholy by their lightheartedness and buoyant spirits—making men awhile forget their sorrows? Check not their mirth, for it may soon die away in a blighting atmosphere. Silence not their voices, for soon may their brow contract, and the cheek wrinkle, and the eye be sunken. Rather make little joys for them, enter into their pleasures, frivolous as they may seem. Those who have the charge over them must conquer their wills, must not spare the rod and spoil the child, must administer reproof and correction when needful. But, oh! let parents, guardians, and teachers, ever speak gently to them. Love is the most potent of all spells—the most effectual of all coercements. Infinite Wisdom knows this, and has been, therefore, guided by the law of love in His own disciplining of His creation. Oh, reader! love the little ones; the world will treat them harshly enough. Give them such early joys as they shall hereafter gladly recall and muse over, when perhaps surrounded with sorrow. Let them see the (if needful) reproving eye softened with a tear, and feel that you suffer more in giving punishment than they do in receiving it. Children are very observant,

and clearly discern between the effect of passion and principle; early do they imbibe ineffaceable impressions; oh! see to it that those given by you be such only as to soften their hearts, and help them forward in the path of love, and strengthen in them admiration of, and clinging to, all that is pure and worthy. True, there is much of foolishness bound up in their hearts, yet despise them not; if less wise, they are more simple; if more easily led astray, they are less hardened—than their elders; they are fresher from the Maker's hand, and owe some of their defilement to you. Oh, how sad and solemn to see one's own sin thus reproduced! Can we be too considerate, too loving, to those whom we have thus injured? Reader! if any of childhood's band hang in any wise on thee, be not ready with reproach—contempt for them. Thou wast a child once, with a child's speech, thoughts, understanding, follies, and sins; bear in mind what were thy feelings then, and do to children now, as you would have been done by. Are you now so free from sin and infirmity, that thou canst altogether look on it as a past thing? Alas! bear you not often the fruit now of what you bitterly condemn in the bud in children? And if thou art a parent, oh! deny not thy full sympathy to the young; thou must seek their confidence; they are generally too timid to venture it unsought; be to them their most intimate friend; not too high above them, not scornful, not

"Too good for daily food."[1]

Better far to bear with their foibles than to keep aloof from their webs of hope and fear, and present joys and troubles. Let them be free in your presence; let the

[1] Wordsworth.

reproving, the warning, if needed, be so administered as not to constrain the unreserved unbosoming of their souls to thee, than whom none ought to be a better confidante as well as guardian.

Be loving to the aged; not only to the good and gentle, but to those also whose acerbity of temper makes them hard to please and discontented; they have had a long, maybe, a rough passage; oh! sweeten to them the little remainder of their pilgrimage; fret not at their garrulity, at their childishness, their imperiosity; but stay gently the trembling form, and gratify the every attainable wish; be more courteous, more deferential, than if they had still the power to enforce it of you; for it is written, "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness;" and, "Rebuke not an elder;" "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man."

"Honour thy father and thy mother;" "ye shall fear every man his mother and his father:" such is the command laid on man by Him, who Himself gave such a bright example of filial reverence and affectionate solicitude. In His childhood, we read of His subjection to His parents, of His ready acquiescence to their will, of His meek yet manly answer to their half-implied correction. In maturer life, the same acting on His mother's wish was manifested at the wedding-feast, though yet, with unerring wisdom, He was lawfully fain to make known to her that He was now arrived at man's estate, and, as such, was bound to act and judge for Himself, specially as being God incarnate. And in the last scene of His agony, the Son turned on her that had borne Him His last look, and, in commending her to His disciple, betrayed His deep love for her, and thoughtful anxiety for

her welfare. How exceeding blessed those who know towards, and receive from, their parents this unfailing love! whose delight is intuitively to further the least desire, to obey the least wish, to provide the unasked benefit, sure of a loving appreciation! who know no secret apart from those on whose judgment and experience they thankfully rely!

"Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase:" "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house;" "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned;" "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" "Let us love in deed and in truth;" "Give alms of such things as ye have;" "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise;" "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." Love never faileth. Alas! there is full scope for its exercise amongst the sicknesses of spirit and body to which flesh is heir to. Reader! is your self so crucified, so buried with Christ, that you are a partaker of His grace of universal charity? Too many of us become selfish even in our religion, in our labours, in our almsgiving; pride and egotism confining the heart in some secluded spot, in some special call. Such is not the offspring of true heavenly love. It never stays content with what has been done; it is not partial; for, whilst needfully concentrating special effort in certain cases, it is open to every cry; the souls and the bodies of the

hungry are alike its care; the absent and the near alike engage thought; every claim of want presented enlists sympathy; for each some effort is made, by personal subscription and labour, by interesting others in the case, or by prayer. Oh, brother, for a large, loving, Christ-like heart! Never, never let us dare to pass by thoughtlessly any representation of our Master! True, the calls seem overwhelming at times, but God makes no requisition that man cannot give. He thus lays unceasing, ever-increasing trusts upon us, that we may be drawn into more intimate business connexion, if one may so speak, with Himself; that we may continually feel ourselves commissioned to bear the tale of a suffering member into His presence-chamber.

What think you of this demand on your interest, your effort, your time, reader? Say,—would it not hallow your life-walk unspeakably if you obeyed it, and were thus continually mediating for your fellow-men, thus often enjoying the privilege of an audience with your God? Maybe, you have thought little hitherto of this wide sphere of intercession; or you have hurriedly given in your tale, and not waited for the answer; or you have forgotten altogether your higher mission-work amidst the multifarious engagements of the nether calling. Oh, I beseech you, think on these claims, and remember that the day of reckoning is fast approaching, and that then the receipt of payment will be looked for from you! Reckon carefully the solemnity, the magnitude, the infinity, of thy past and present debts, and seek, in the strength of the same Almighty Saviour who has blotted out the iniquity of the past, henceforth to live more carefully, more honestly, redeeming the time, giving to each man that which thou owest him, and esteeming

intercessory duties worthy of as strictly fulfilled engagements, as earnest thought, as enthusiastic effort, as the outer ones of thine ordinary life. Learn thus to live better—to fill up your time. Spiritually, thou wilt thyself reap the gain, for such intercommunion with the Lord constantly, such fellowship in the present work of Christ and the Spirit, such preoccupation of thought, and time, and talents, will keep thee beyond much of the stagnating influence of the lower atmosphere. Universal, unfailing love is a thing of Divine origin, and needs continual replenishing from the same Source; only of His own can we give to God; strange fire is not accepted on His altar. God grant us grace unshrinkingly to search into our best obligations, and through the same grace to fulfil the burden of our service!

> "So live that, when thy summons comes to join
> The innumerable caravan, that moves
> To the pale realms of shade, where each shall take
> His chamber in the silent halls of death,
> Thou go not, like the quarry-slave, at night,
> Scourged to his dungeon; but, sustained and soothed
> By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
> Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
> About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."[1]

But, oh, how contrary is all this to nature! how far, *far* off from our yet attainment! "I am black," may well be the confession of the bride, as a whole, and of each individual member. "Look not upon me, for I am black;" and such must man ever intrinsically be; there is no light *in him*, no possibility of his ever attaining, in his own strength, or through his own merits! And yet this inability, this innate defilement, is no excuse for the

[1] Bryant.

sad dissimilarity between the Master and the disciple, inasmuch as He is willing to give all grace; and were our eye more single, our life more simply in Him, were our personal, alone efforts and ambition dropped altogether, then should we be strong, and shining in His light; we should be as a spot of hallowed ground, reflecting truly the God of love. If we would do much for Christ, we must live much upon Him. Yes, reader, here is the secret of shortcomings—that as yet self is not dead; here the secret of high and holy attainment—a life hid with Christ in God! Lay both truths to heart, and agonise, with all the fervency of which you are capable, to have more revealed to you of Him in whom you have found salvation.

"He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." Close inward communion alone can so build up the believer as thus to shine, as thus to partake of, and give out, the love that never faileth. If we would have God give Himself to us, show us Himself, we must entirely, without reservation, give ourselves to God. "Paul was so taken up with Jesus, that nothing sweeter than His name could drop from his pen and lips. It is observed that he hath the word Jesus five hundred times in his Epistles."[1] And we must be learners in the same school, if we would be of the same mind toward Christ. There is a force in the expression, "in whom are *hid* all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" not left open to be stumbled on by chance, but demanding effort, search, for their acquisition. Is not the same thought conceived in regard to the desire of the wretched for death, in the words, "which long for it, and dig for it more than for hid treasures?" There is a beauty in Jesus worthy of discovery,

[1] Charnock.

a fulness, an infinity of perfection, requiring concentrated and continued effort of research; and they who seek shall find, when they search with all their heart. Man is in part moulded by the society in which he mingles. Happy thought for those who company with the Lord of hosts! His shadow falling on them, shall sanctify them; His rays, piercing them, shall lighten them; His love, shining on them, shall form like love in them, and make it to spring up and blossom.

Charity never faileth. How can it? since, when once its attractions have fixed the wandering heart, He reveals to it yet more and more of Himself, causing it to "inherit substance;" Yes, *substance*, not an ideality. He gives very real, very true, joys and blessings; albeit to the worldling, whose taste is unassimilated to the same, they seem but unreal shadows. And to those thus instructed in *His* love, thus trained to the same, it becomes necessary, in like manner, to give out again of their godly treasures; and thus the work of the Gospel is supremely to bless, to give forth delights, to minister, to scatter love broadcast.

Beloved reader! never forget this inscription, which nature and revelation alike testify of our God; and think, if time, with all its mists, all its separating seas, finds it to be blessedly true, how much of the fulness of Love must yet remain behind, to be unravelled in a more congenial atmosphere! If His love be precious in time, what will it be through eternity? Oh, then, let us hang on Him, gaze on Him, evermore, and with zeal untiring as His own, shed the radiance of Love's lamp on the world around, joying always that "Now the soft peace-march beats, Home, brothers, home!"

CONCLUSION.

Meek and lowly, pure and holy,
  Chief among the blessed three;
Turning sadness into gladness—
  Heaven-born art thou, Charity!
Pity dwelleth in thy bosom,
  Kindness reigneth o'er thy heart;
Gentle thoughts alone can sway thee,
  Judgment hath in thee no part.

Hoping ever, failing never,
  Though deceived, believing still;
Long abiding, all-confiding,
  To thy Heavenly Father's will.
Never weary of well-doing,
  Never fearful of the end;
Claiming all mankind as brothers,
  Thou dost all alike befriend.

CHARLES JEFFREYS.

CONCLUSION.

"AND now, farewell! Time, unrevoked, has run his wonted course." Would that, with the poet, I could add, "yet *what I wished is done!*"[1] Believe me, beloved fellow-traveller! I weep to send forth so poor, so frail, so unworthy a testimony of Him whose love and mercy deserve untold affection and gratitude, whose praises are high beyond the power of human thought to conceive. Yet I venture it forth as seed, received from Him, and given out in His name. Having often felt, though, that in these days, when preachings, and meetings, and books, are so increased, there is a danger of Christians seeking less personal communion and direct teaching from the Master, I would entreat of you to let my volume lead you only closer to Him and His written word; if any thoughts expressed in it commend themselves to your mind, let them fire you with the loving determination that they shall be but as stepping-stones to yet deeper searchings into the mine of His unfathomable, inexhaustible fulness. Like the Bereans of old, test all by the written revelation, and seek so to learn from God Himself of His love, that the same may be perfected in you. If, through the gleanings of fellow-learners, we are, at an earlier stage, placed in possession of fuller revelations, on a higher platform, than they were, let us

[1] Cowper.

see to it that we make corresponding advances with them, in proportion to our privileges, lest the woe of the cities of old become affixed to us. Let us remember we can only savingly learn of God through Himself, and if His teachings to another be lent us, they are blessed only if received in humility, as from Him, and as leading closer into Him.

The purpose of my efforts has been so to gather the scattered traits detailed of God's character, as perfect Love, that we might better realise the height and symmetry of Him who demands, and is worthy of, our deepest adoration, our devoted attachment; for "surely the love of Jesus is as simple an affection as the love of an earthly object;"[1] and that, thus gazing on Him, we might more perfectly apprehend that standard to which He calls us. But at each step I have been more and more constrained to acknowledge, from the depths of my soul, "now we see through a glass darkly." Yes, truly precious, and sufficient unto salvation as is our sure word of prophecy, the light within is yet dark by which to read it. Little do we realise the awful strivings between the Spirit and Satan for the possession of our hearts; little the intense yearning with which a Father and Saviour long for our sanctification and supreme blessedness; and the devilish craving for our eternal condemnation, backslidings, or, at least, to keep us blinded to much that would place us, even now, very near heaven!

Only in part do we know; as babes, we are able to bear yet little more than the milk of revelation. And yet, reader, we might know very much more if we would, if we were thoroughly earnest and true-hearted

[1] A. N. Groves.

in our love, if we did not allow ourselves to be so benighted, so enslaved by Satan, the world, and our own heart. There is a freshness, a newness, in the old things of the Gospel record, so that no one passage can ever be exhausted. God's infinity is manifest in His expressions as in His works; and it is for us, who profess to love Him chiefest of all to give ourselves continually to the searching of all through which He shines. Love can know no weariness in these seekings and ponderings, for His fulness is inexhaustible, giving to the digger distaste for all other food with which to satisfy the insatiable cravings of his nature, and ever-keener appetite for its own hidden, good things. And though my own painful conviction is, that I have fearfully fallen short of it, my fervent desire has been to betray some of His altogether loveliness unto you, fellow-Christian, to whet your appetite by the goodly savour, to induce you to more determined, impassioned study of Him than has been your wont in time past; to (if such be not presumptuous, since I would fain hope that you have risen to a far higher class of knowledge and attainment than I, in His school) open to you glimpses into His Spirit that you may have passed unnoticed. For, oh! with my whole heart, with my whole soul, would I sound forth that, in so far as my own sins and infirmities have allowed me to taste of His fulness, to live hidden in Him, I have found Him surpassingly lovely, inexpressibly dear, and worthy of undivided study. God grant that, through the Spirit's agency, the weak testimony may at least incite fervent study of the blessed Being in whom love dwells unmeasured! Pray, dear reader, that it may be so—that He may be glorified!

A secondary aim has been in holding up the Divine

likeness, to show forth somewhat of the standard required of each of us, who are honoured to be His disciples. Deeply has my heart been convicted of sin on every point; and believe me, dear reader! in setting forth His desire for His people, I have struggled myself to learn and attain, and will, through grace, continue to do so, even as I have asked of you to do. The work has been to my own self most fearfully humbling, so that I have shrunk from continuing it again and again; but have still continued, not daring to shut the little door of service for God, apparently opened by His own hand.

A very blessed season of intercommuning with our God and each other have we had, but for awhile we must part now. Will you accept the love of a fellow-pilgrim Zion-bound, with this message from above? Will you not pass over it slightly, but, reminding the Lord of His promises, *never* cease to struggle after clearer revelations of Him till you behold Him unveiled? Will you strive to nail self to His cross, and be a living witness of His power to change and sanctify? Will you make His ministry your life-long object? Will you seek to gladden every being that crosses your path, so shining always in His light, that the very atmosphere around you may breathe of love and blessing?

To one point would I specially direct your attention, in the study of the varied phases of perfect love; each directly tends upward to the perfect symmetry of the whole. And in this mark of perfection is a warning given, testifying to nature's contrariety to the same, hinting, at what experience proves too true, that, even in the search after God and godly attainment, man is prone to follow his own inclination, and study most those traits which approve themselves most to his taste, and those commands which

blend most naturally with the habits of his constitution. Now, when a child has an unmistakeable talent for anything, naturally the guardians foster the same, making its growth the chief point in education; but, because he so excels in drawing, would they neglect grammar? because of a splendid ear and voice, would the learning to read be shunned? So, doubtless, God intends us to be guided, in a measure, by the tastes and talents He gives individually, and which will cause the same truth to be looked on in different aspects; but we must beware of any wilful, blind clinging to such views and attainments as the best, the true ones,—of any caricaturing of Christianity. Rather let us labour as the bee, "to gather honey from every opening flower;" let us seek, whilst yielding intensest devotion to one special branch of spiritual study, to gain here a little, and there a little, from the diverse tastes and experiences of other brethren. Let our aim be to know Christ in all His perfection; to see, albeit dimly, His *whole* beauty, His every grace; to attain ourselves to a holy proportion. Perhaps nothing more than a true view on this point will tend to shed abroad in our hearts a love for man. We know not which are commissioned of God to bear us a message; we know not on how many He hath set His seal; we know not but that some, now most rebellious, are even now unthinkingly laying in store which shall, on their conversion, tend to make them mighty instruments of God. Each human vessel is laden with precious freight. God Himself has stored it, having sent it forth "from His hand very good." Oh! then, longing as we are to have God revealed unto us, let us study His works; and through their very diversity learn somewhat that shall

help us with wider comprehension to lay hold on His words—on Himself.

Vast, unsearchable, is the field of exploration, as well as of work, before us! Daily, hourly, let us set ourselves to both, gladdened as we cull each new flower, cheered, as in weakness we at any time fail, with the remembrance that now we see only in part; it will be infinitely better when we see the whole. Earnestly would I remind you that if, though, you would lay hold successfully on the love of God and man, you must wholly, from this time forward, separate yourself unto the work; it is a great one; it is one that demands the whole heart and mind; it is one on which hang eternal consequences; one that required even the undivided effort of the Son of God.

And now, as we mount the hill, and revel in yet deeper acquaintance with Him whom to know is life eternal, as our own being reciprocates gradually the character on which we gaze, as we long after Him with increasing, unspeakable desire, and yet increasingly are fain to cry, "I see but darkly; it is too bright for mine eye to pierce; the revelations of the glass overpower me;" with what rapturous hope and joy do we take up and echo the promise—"*then face to face!*" The bliss is almost too excessive. Strange, that we can so coldly dream of it at times, and be distracted by the tinsel of aught that is passing away!

Beloved reader, would that the charge of enthusiasm could be laid at our door! would that we were ever living in the Spirit; ever rejoicing that "as He is, so are we in this world;" not only pardoned through Him, but accepted into the place of sons, already possessed of the

inheritance through promise, by which it is as surely ours as if already we were entered visibly into it! Oh! I would lay it on your conscience, never to rest till you rightly apprehend that unto which Christ, through death, resurrection, and ascension, has appointed you.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs." This, and nothing short of it, is the portion assigned us; shall we be content with less than God wills to give? Rather let us always use the lent glass with humility and fervency of spirit; it will ever throw the things of time and eternity into their comparative true light; it will open to us such riches of glory, such enchanting prospects, that we shall be allured step by step onward, even though the way be rough, and stony, and thorny, until—— but there we may not yet penetrate. Canaan's joys are revealed only to the saints as the tabernacle is clothed with resurrection power, and in spotless beauty they are admitted into the golden streets. What heaven will be is beyond the power of finite mind to grasp, but the saint's life will have a perfected continuance, with every hindrance removed, the need for chastening gone, all within and all without inspiring love and holiness, and, with enlarged capacities, an ever-increasing grasping of knowledge.

I would commend this promise as a parting word to you; whilst I entreat you now, with all your concentrated powers, to make the attainment of the love of God, in spirit and action, your one undeviating aim; "*then face to face!*" Now you may have clouds of darkness over you, storms around, darts transfixing your souls, grief freezing, as it were, your very life-blood. But the bow is still in the cloud; the echo rings through earth;

each suffering child, each rejoicing child, passing it on—"then face to face!" Part we now then, beloved friend, in Christ, to meet again! Meanwhile let each of us, as on a ray issuing from the Sun of Righteousness, dart in straight unto Jesus, nearer to Him, more like unto Him—this our supreme, our only desire; and then necessarily shall we, albeit personally unknown, be made like, and drawn nearer unto, each other, until the words, "Now we see through a glass darkly," merge into the thrilling exclamation of untold, unending joy—*now, face to face!*

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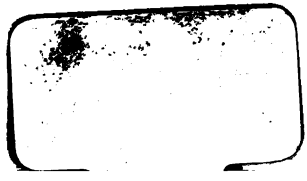
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